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Samir Amin

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Pioneer of the Rise of the South

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Preface

Samir Amin: Pioneer of the Rise of the South

Samir Amin is an outstanding intellectual with a truly global horizon combined with an enormous productivity.[1] His scientific work overcomes the over-specialization that characterizes many theoreticians and planners of development. Their narrow scientific approach, their fixation on models is alien to Amin. His capacity to pursue evidence-based research in the best sense of the word, from a historical and comparative perspective, is quite rare. His analyses always take into account socio-structural conditions and considerations of political power, and his orientations, ideologies and ways of thinking point the way ahead, and this has made him a source of never-ending inspiration through a historical-materialist approach that rejects orthodoxy and dogmatism. Amin's driving force has always been to notice new development trends and to review his own position, to initiate new debates, and to get involved in ongoing ones. The source of this intellectual and political impetus has been a continuing curiosity and an argumentative political disposition. And this curiosity and argumentative disposition extend from analytical contributions to global historical developments prior to the existence of capitalism up to reflections on topical development projects in the narrowest context. His work forms an empirically based and fundamental critique of capitalism, but also provides pioneering proposals for a desirable future. As Samir Amin once argued, he has never been a 'tiers-mondiste' (focusing only on Third World issues), but always a 'mondiste' with a global orientation. This—and not only this—distinguishes him from many of those who hold prominent positions in the Who's Who of social and development theory, and more recently of world analysis. His lifelong scientific achievements demonstrate a freedom of thinking that has always resisted constraint.

[1] This text is based on the *laudatio* by Prof. Dr. Dieter Senghaas (University of Bremen) on 4 December 2009 in Berlin, where Samir Amin was awarded the Ibn Rushd Prize for Free Thinking. This text was translated from German into English by Hans Günter Brauch and language-edited by Mike Headon, Colwyn Bay, Wales (UK). The laudatio of Prof. Dr. Dieter Senghaas in German is at: <http://www.ibn-rushd.org/typo3/cms/en/awards/2009/laudatory-held-by-dieter-senghaas/>. The acceptance speech by Prof. Dr. Samir Amin in Arabic is at: <http://www.ibn-rushd.org/typo3/cms/en/awards/2009/speech-of-the-prize-winner/>.

Samir Amin has been one of the most important and influential intellectuals of the Third World. In contrast with many development researchers who emerged in both industrialized and developing countries during the nearly six decades which his comprehensive work covers, he has always pursued a global perspective. *Accumulation at the global level*: this paradigm for diagnoses of the history, structure and development dynamic of the world as a whole rather than single continents, societies or regions became an analytical and political challenge to all current analytical and political thinking on development, especially of the Neoclassical and Soviet Marxist schools.

Samir Amin was born on 3 September 1931 in Cairo, the son of an Egyptian father and a French mother who were both medical doctors. His childhood and youth were spent in Port Said where he attended the Lycée Français and where he obtained his baccalauréat in 1947. From 1947 to 1957, he studied in Paris where his Ph.D. in economics (1957) was preceded by diplomas in political science (1952) and in statistics (1956). In his early autobiography *Itinéraire intellectuel* (1993), Amin wrote that during these times he preferred to invest only a minimum of his time in preparation for his university exams in order to be able to devote most of his time to militant action. His politicization, already evident during his period as a high school student, obviously continued in Paris—unsurprisingly, since Paris has always been a metropolis with an incomparable and highly vibrant intellectual life. The city was a scientific meeting place for intellectuals and students from all over the world, not just from the Francophone parts of Africa. Immediately after his arrival in Paris, Amin joined the *Communist Party of France* (PCF) and so he naturally became involved with the intellectual and political controversies within the left and its various factions that were to dominate the intellectual scene in the French metropolis for several decades. His later distancing from Soviet Marxism and its development paradigms was influenced by his experiences during these early years when Amin, together with other Third World students, was editing the journal *Étudiants Anticolonialistes.* This journal was not always popular with the Central Committee of the PCF. Several of Amin's comrades-in-arms later held leading positions in the administrations of newly independent Third World countries, especially in Africa.

In 1957, Amin submitted his Ph.D. dissertation and one of his advisers was François Perroux. He proposed as its title *Aux origines du sous-développement, l'accumulation capitaliste à l'échelle mondiale* [On the origins of under-development, capitalist accumulation at the global level]. But this title was too sensitive for the Paris of the mid-1950s. His advisers persuaded him to choose a rather more esoteric title instead: *Les effets structurels de l'intégration internationale des économies précapitalistes. Une étude théorique du mécanisme qui a engendré les économies dites sous-développées* [The structural effects of international integration of precapitalist economies. A theoretical study of the mechanisms that generated the so-called under-developed countries]. In his dissertation Amin correctly assumed that the thesis of under-development as a product of capitalism had not previously been formulated from this specific perspective. His key idea, as presented in 1957, was that the 'under-developed economy' should not be considered

as an independent (self-referential) unit but only as a building block of a capitalist world economy, and that the societies of the periphery required a permanent structural adjustment with respect to the reproduction dynamics of the centres of world capitalism, that is, of the advanced capitalist industrial countries.

One has to take the context of the 1950s into account. Amin's thesis was indeed new and original in the framework of the debates on development theory and politics that were in their initial phase of ascendancy: at that time in Latin America the so-called *desarrollismo* (CEPAL, Prebisch et al.) was emerging, that was developed further a decade later in the discussion on *dependencia*. Wallerstein's world system analysis came even later. But even the conventional development theories had not yet really come to prominence; their representatives (W. A. Lewis, A. Hirschman, G. Myrdal, W. W. Rostow, P. Rosenstein-Rodan et al.) had been presented by the World Bank in 1984 in the volume *Pioneers in Development*. Only from the late 1960s could it be observed that discussions on development policy received essential impulses from international organizations, such as UNCTAD, the World Bank, and later the ILO.

It is therefore astonishing that Amin produced as early as 1957 a precise and subtle critique of positions taken 10–20 years later by his intellectual opponents. His critique also extended to Soviet Marxism and its development program of 'catching up and overtaking' ('rattrapage'). These facts have often been overlooked because Amin's thesis of 1957 was not published until 1970 in extended book form under the title *L'accumulation à l'échelle mondiale* (Accumulation at the global level).

After obtaining his Ph.D. Amin returned to Cairo where from 1957 to 1960 he was *Chef du Service des Études de l'Organisme de Développement Économique* (Director of the research agency of the organization of economic development). He was to some extent entering the lion's den, because in the planning administration the further development of Egypt was planned in a way that went against Amin's insights. Not only because of this, but to escape personal dangers and difficulties, Amin left Cairo to become an adviser for the planning ministry in Bamako (Mali) from 1960 to 1963. This was a time when many African countries were becoming independent and a political radicalization ('African socialism') could be observed on that continent. In 1963 Amin was offered a post at the *Institut Africain de Développement Économique et de Planification* (IDEP). From 1963 to 1970 he worked at this Institute in Dakar, established by the United Nations, and at the same time taught at the University of Poitiers and later at the Universities of Dakar and Paris (Paris VIII–Vincennes). In 1970 Amin became director of IDEP, where he remained until 1980.

During this time several big conferences took place that supported networking among Third World intellectuals working on development issues: in 1972, there was the first conference for theoreticians of peripheral capitalism such as Amin and prominent theoreticians of *dependencia* (Cardoso, Quijano et al.). I was honoured to participate and intellectually benefitted from this 1972 conference as one of three scholars from industrialized countries to be admitted, though not without reservations. (This conference motivated me to edit a volume on *Peripherer Kapitalismus. Analysen über Abhängigkeit und Unterentwicklung* [Peripheral

capitalism. Analyses on dependency and underdevelopment], published in 1974). In retrospect with regard to his time at IDEP, Amin emphasized that the goal was to educate about a 1000 young African intellectuals who were to gain the capacity to assess development programmes and policies critically.

In 1980, Amin left IDEP and became the director of the *Forum du Tiers Monde*, also headquartered in Dakar. This forum is an NGO whose task is to link through globally oriented projects, conferences, and platforms intercontinental discussion on development issues from the perspective of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. In 1996, Amin accepted in addition the presidency of the *Forum Mondial des Alternatives* which perceives itself as a counterpart of the World Economic Forum in Davos and that presented in 1997 the manifesto *Il est temps de renverser le cours de l'histoire* [It is time to reverse the course of history].

Samir Amin has published about 50 books; most have been translated into many other languages. His most important early work is undoubtedly *L'accumulation à l'échelle mondiale* (1970). Another milestone is his book *Le développement inégal* (1973), which was translated into many languages. Between these two books there were several publications in which Amin in light of his theory dealt with specific country studies (on Egypt, Mali, Guinea, Ghana, the Maghreb countries, the Ivory Coast, Senegal, and West Africa in general and the Arab region). *Classe et Nation dans l'histoire et la crise contemporaine* (1979) is another important publication that opens up a perspective on global history and development history that transcends narrow discussions on development theory. Amin's analysis of the option of socialist development can be found in his *L'avenir du maoïsme* (1981). The essence of his thinking on decoupling is contained in his book *La déconnexion* (1985). After 1989 and 1990 Amin published several books on globalization and on its inherent crises (for example, *L'Empire du chaos,* 1991). He offered a critical assessment of contemporary debates, especially in response to a dogmatic postmodernism, in *Critique de l'air du temps* (1997). His book *L'hégémonisme des États-Unis et l'effacement du projet européen* (2000) is a brilliant plea for a 'European Project' as a counter to undisputable US hegemony in order to submit no longer—as in the wars in the Gulf and Kosovo—to the 'Washington Diktat'. Later, Amin repeatedly regretted that this much-desired European project remained weak and in no position to develop its own globally relevant stance. In Amin's diagnosis, it has fallen through because of submission to the hegemony of Washington. His later works develop his criticism of capitalism and his critique of the global power structure (*Au-delà du capitalisme sénile*, 2002); they also intervene in the debate on postmodernist and culturalist movements and fashions (*Modernité, religion et démocrati*e, 2008). In all his publications, Amin has been an astute analyst but at the same time always a political writer.

What then has been Amin's intellectual contribution to global and development analysis: the contribution of the scientist, of the contemporary analyst, and of the intellectual arguing acutely but always from an informed political perspective?

From a global historical perspective *development* is identical with capitalist development. But in differing from Marx and the bourgeois economists Amin

has always relied on the observation that *real capitalism* can only be analyzed from a global perspective. Hence his title that showed the way for others to follow: *L'accumulation à l'échelle mondiale*. However, Amin does not suppose that the plundering of the southern continents during the period of early colonialism and mercantilism caused a breakthrough toward agricultural and industrial capitalism among the successful early industrializing countries. Neither does he assume that industrial development in the so-called centers or metropolises of capitalism could have occurred without the peripheries in the southern continents (the colonies, the informal empire, etc.). During the early phase of agricultural and industrial capitalist development, successful only in Europe, this process was facilitated by the existence of peripheries but they were not its functional cause. The development dynamics of the centres resulted from an inherent accumulation dynamics whose structural and political background resulted in an *agricultural revolution* as a consequence of the process of defeudalization. This resulted in a synchronous or somewhat later broad *industrialization* that led first to the production of simple and nondurable products for a mass market; through this, simultaneously or a little later, a new capital sector evolved; the products of this capital sector significantly increased productivity in the agricultural and consumer sector and then also in the capital sector. For Amin, it is important to observe from a secular development perspective that in the European centers of capitalist development, as a result of successful political struggles, an increase in real wages followed the increase in the productivity of the whole economy; this facilitated the creation of a dynamic of the domestic market that stimulated increases in productivity in all sectors. Such a dynamic had been created much earlier in the USA and in the two European settler colonies of Australia and New Zealand by the relative shortage of labor.

Just as the dynamic of metropolitan accumulation cannot be explained purely through economics but only through analyzing socio-structural development and the constellations of political conflict (political struggles with historically and principally open consequences), so the dynamic of peripheral accumulation cannot be conceived purely in terms of economics. For Amin it emerged in such a way that the peripheries as external territories, as exclaves of capitalist centers, were forced to integrate into an *unequal* international division of labor, and as a result a structure of asymmetric interdependence evolved. In a different way from how the concepts of dualism underpin theories of modernization, this type of integration into the world market leads to a reinforcement of the image of 'periphery', since as a result of the accumulation dynamic that prevails in the peripheries the reservoir of cheap labor that will remain cheap never dries up, regardless of whether in practice the economy in the exclave is based on agriculture or mineral extraction, or whether the first stages of industrialization ('import substitution industrialization', industrialization through the replacement of imports to encourage local production) are to be seen.

Why does the reservoir of cheap labor not decline? Why does no synchronization of the development of productivity and of wages take place in the peripheries? Why does no widespread and extensive intensification of capital exist? The answer may be found in the model of peripheral accumulation dynamics that

Amin gradually developed as a result of case studies of many countries employing many comparative observations. These facts may be described relatively easily: the dynamic of peripheral accumulation is systematically distorted. It has as background the lack of a broadly based agricultural revolution. It gains its dynamics through an export economy that relies on exclaves. Its counterpart is an import sector of 'luxury goods' defined as a demand coming from the consumed part of the profits. What is lacking in this accumulation dynamic is 'auto-centered development': the inevitable feedback of a sector for mass consumer goods and a sector for capital equipment (i.e., of machines that have been locally produced) on the back of increasing agricultural productivity.

From this it is obvious that for Samir Amin the question of agriculture has been and still is of central strategic relevance for development. Many of his empirical studies have addressed this problem. As an inevitable consequence, for him the agricultural question has not only been a question of the distribution of land but may also be understood as the problem of how in this sector legal certainty (property rights) may emerge and to what degree an equivalent industrial sector may be willing to supply and be capable of supplying infrastructure goods and equipment that will permit a dynamization of the agricultural sector.

From Amin's analyses the prognosis may be that the transition from a dynamic of peripheral accumulation to economic development in terms of metropolitan capitalism remains improbable if not impossible ('développement bloqué'). Hence his pleas for 'déconnexion' or 'decoupling'. Decoupling is thus defined as the submission of the external relations of a country to the logic of genuine internal development. This is the opposite of the prevailing orientation of the peripheries, which is to satisfy the needs of metropolitan capitalism with the consequence of an inevitable *polarization* of existing capitalism at the global level: its moulding of *metropolitan* and *dependent peripheral* capitalism. Such a strategy of 'auto-centered' development through decoupling cannot be imagined without active intervention by the state. It is the task of the state, together with interested social parties, to find that mixed strategy whose goal it must be to selectively use the opportunities of the world market—*as long as they are compatible with the state's own project*—for the dynamization of a broadly based internal development.

For Amin it was clear that such a development option (decoupling, not autarky!) requires corresponding political preconditions. His case studies of countries, initially limited to North and sub-Saharan Africa, taught him that such an elite, that is, a national bourgeoisie oriented toward a national project, neither existed nor was in the process of emerging. Rather, he saw everywhere the creation of a *comprador bourgeoisie* (meaning more or less what André Gunder Frank later described as the "Lumpenbourgeoisie"). This *comprador bourgeoisie*—and this was demonstrated by the empirical material—could only foresee its future in the integration of their countries into an asymmetrically structured capitalist world market, since they would directly benefit from such an integration. Decoupling could only be an instrument of a differently oriented development—of a development beyond capitalism (including its state socialist variation). These considerations motivated Amin to analyze in detail the Chinese development strategy.

This development paradigm, which Amin constantly refined and corrected at a detailed level, contradicted from the outset any model of linear-evolutionist development. His approach challenged the 'developmentalism' of the bourgeois or neoclassical variant of development theory. Amin explicitly opposed the 'desarrollismo concept' that emerged from the CEPAL school. He considered it analytically as reasonably workable (although not fully convincing) but politically an illusion. With this paradigm, Amin also contested the development ideology of Soviet Marxism which had attracted much sympathy among the new elites of the Third World during the phase of decolonization and also during the post-colonial years of nation-building. The consequence was that Amin, during the 1970s and 1980s, was extremely sceptical and fundamentally critical of several prominent programmes of development policy and planning: for example the New International Economic Order (and its operative concepts), the strategy of basic needs, and the ILO programfor the informal sector.

From his perspective the goal could not be 'catching up and overtaking' but only a different form of development: 'faire autre chose!': a different development strategy for those population groups that have been systematically discriminated against and marginalized necessitated their politicization and democratization. After the liberation of the peoples ('libération des peuples') as a consequence of the successful struggle for decolonization, Amin now focused on social revolutionary movements, on a revolution of the masses ('révolution des masses'). Economic development has always been and still is for Amin a *political* economy and even more a process of cultural revolution, because 'faire autre chose' is not conceivable without a corresponding political consciousness.

In the timely context of his dissertation Samir Amin examined three social projects:

Fordism with the consequence (at least in Europe) of a social democratic welfare state, the 'Soviet' model as opposed to capitalist development, and 'desarrollismo' or 'developmentalism' as a project of development by catching up. As early as 1989–1990, but especially during the 1990s and later, Amin examined the failure of these three projects in a number of publications. The social democratic welfare state and its specific regulatory mechanisms were eroded; the possibilities for political steering by the state were undermined by the globalization of capitalism, and equivalent means of control which could only have been set up by international organizations did not exist at the regional or global level. The Soviet model collapsed because of its internal contradictions, and especially because the transition from an extensive to an intensive economy failed, and this was (among other reasons) another consequence of the absence of political reforms. And so all hopes for this alternative model, widespread for decades in the Third World but never shared by Amin, collapsed. Finally came the failure of 'Bandung', seen as a label for a 'catching up' system of development. This resulted in a differentiation within the Third World into a few centers which Amin considered as newly semi-industrialized countries and into a world of the marginality of the 'fourth world' ('quart mondialisation') which includes not only large areas of the Southern continents but also parts of the former socialist countries.

It is not surprising that due to these developments Samir Amin did diagnose what one of his book titles of 1990s signaled pointedly as *Le grand tumulte* (1991) and as *L'Empire du chaos* (1991). A world without reliable mechanisms of regulation at the national and international level, without an inspiring counter-model and without recognizable prospects for development success—a world in which an increasing polarization at the world level and within societies could no longer be tolerated and which was becoming increasingly politicized. In such a world the worst might be expected, without mentioning other world problems such as global environmental change.

For Samir Amin the global crisis of capitalism has continuously intensified during the past twenty-five years, despite intermittent phases of economic growth which, seen retrospectively, did not overcome the fundamental contradictions of the system: the trend towards polarization, towards inequality and towards marginalization, which have all rather increased. During this period the 'liberal virus' has spread, i.e., the tendency to deregulate everything *(Le virus libéral. La guerre permanente et l'américanisation du monde,* 2003). Amin foresaw the global financial crisis resulting from a combination of a growing inequality of income, deregulation of financial markets, irresponsible business behaviour and other factors, for example when he wrote, as early as 2001: "But the 'financial bubble' cannot grow without limits: one day it will burst. It is already a cause for concern. Therefore, some reformers suggest reducing the danger by removing the incentives for speculative short-term placements, e.g., by the splendid Tobin Tax."

This very development of the financial market—its delimitation and its autodynamic (self-referential) expansion without any mechanisms of self-correction—is a prototypical example for what Amin has called the "fetishizing of the market". This and other catastrophic developments especially during the past two decades are the result of a political herd instinct, particularly in the behaviour of the leading capitalist industrial societies. They all followed the orthodoxy that blossomed in the Anglo-Saxon world: TINA ("There is no alternative"), and this led Amin to diagnose the hegemony of the USA, but now linked to the development of a 'collective imperialism', especially among the societies of the so-called triad (USA or North America, EU Europe, and Japan). This club also tries to monopolize those fields of action that are relevant for the further development of the world: technology, financial flows, access to the raw materials of the world, communication and media, as well as weapons of mass destruction. Associated with this club of collective imperialism are the so-called semi-peripheries. The transition of the G-8 to the G-20, as has recently occurred at least in terms of declarations, could possibly be a step toward a *dependent cooptation*. The rest of the world would remain 'the rest'. Wherever political interests made it necessary, these countries would become the object of military intervention. But given the chaotic situation in many countries of the world, the prospects for a successful and cost-efficient intervention remain poor.

Are there ways out of this catastrophic situation? Samir Amin has always been not only an incisive analyst but also a political activist with a clear perspective. Some examples may be briefly noted:

1. There is a need for a 'new start towards development', i.e., of a critical alternative development concept, not based on 'development by catching up' but

oriented towards a different noncapitalist development. According to Amin this would be a 'socialist development', but not in the sense of the single socialist development projects of Soviet Marxism. This new start should rely on social movements. And it is this assumption that motivates Samir Amin's global and untiring activities in various nongovernmental organizations—because the elites cannot be expected to launch such a new start.

2. Furthermore, and logically consistently, Samir Amin argues that without decoupling (which is not identical with autarky) there will be no new start toward development. Decoupling means the subordination of external relations to the needs of the internal structure, and not the other way round, e.g., no unilateral adjustment to the tendencies prevailing at the global level.
3. Emphatically, Samir Amin pleads for a regionalization of the world *(Pour un monde multipolaire,* 2005). This represents a plea for a regionally oriented 'collective self-reliance' as a basis for the restructuring of global relations and the regulation of needs to be agreed on at the global level.

It may be asked: are these single program points, here shortly outlined and in toto, not the expression of pure utopia? Amin's answer to this question is: yes, but these proposals that point the way ahead follow the logic of a 'creative utopia'. "History is not ruled by the infallible unfolding of the law of pure economy. It is created by the societal reactions to these tendencies that express themselves in these laws and that determine the social conditions in whose framework these laws operate. The 'anti-systemic' forces impact and also influence real history as does the pure logic of the capitalist accumulation."

Samir Amin has been exposed throughout his life to such contrary and highly politicized logics, and he himself has contributed convincingly to controversial debates about these logics at a global level.

May 2013

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Photo of Samir Amin (Egypt) as the Ibn Rushd Prize Winner for Freedom of Thought (2009). Photo from the personal photo collection of the author

Photograph from World People's Blog on Samir Amin, 27 May 2007. *Source* "Samir Amin-Egypt; at: <http://word.world-citizenship.org/wp-archive/1299>

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Part I
On Samir Amin

Samir Amin. Photograph from the personal photo collection of the author

Chapter 1
Biographical Notes

Samir[1] was born in Egypt in 1931 to an Egyptian father and a French mother. Both his parents were medical doctors and came from bourgeois society, but they were not reactionary, he says. His mother came from a family of convinced Jacobins, whereas his father was a left-wing 'wafdist', a bourgeois democrat with nationalist beliefs, but modernist nationalist beliefs that, culturally speaking, were not anti-European.

Samir completed his primary and secondary education in Egypt at the Lycée Français, of which he has fond memories. According to him, this establishment was of a high level of culture and disseminated very progressive ideas. He says that he learnt a lot about the history of Egypt there, more than Egyptians do in Egyptian schools. His secondary school years took place during the Second World War. During these times, Egyptian students from the Lycée Français, who represented a significant minority, were extremely politicized. They were divided between two groups, the communists and the nationalists. The latter were somewhat anti-British, though not pro-German, let alone pro-Nazi. The students belonging to the communist trend granted more importance to the social dimension of the problem and saw links between imperialism and colonialism and the class structure of Egyptian society. Samir belonged to this latter movement.

1.1 Higher Education in Paris

After obtaining his first high school diploma (baccalauréat) in 1947, Samir Amin left for Paris where he obtained his second high school diploma, with a specialization in elementary mathematics, at the Lycée Henri IV, one of the most prestigious

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lycées in France, where students prepared for the competitive entrance examinations for the Grandes Ecoles, the most selective French universities. He then completed his higher education in Paris. Initially he was not destined for economics but rather for physics, because, according to his teachers, he had demonstrated an excellent aptitude in this discipline. For this reason they advised him to attend preparatory classes in mathematics and advanced mathematics (math sup and math spé) in order to prepare for the entrance examination for the Ecole Normale Supérieure.

To his teachers' great disappointment, Samir Amin decided to study economics. This decision caused his teachers to write to his parents to try to discourage him from giving up physics to study law! At the time it was indeed necessary to start with a bachelor's degree in law to then be able to go on to study economics.

But fortunately for him, his parents were very tolerant and had decided to support their son's choice. Samir Amin had decided to enrol in Sciences Po at the same time. He would say later that his decision was guided by the conviction that this path would give him the option of having a professional life much closer to his militant concerns, whereas physics would have encouraged him to fully separate his professional life and his political life, since he was considering getting involved in political struggles.

He brilliantly concluded his studies with a PhD in political economy that he defended in 1957. Simultaneously he had graduated not only from Sciences Po but also from the statistics institute INSEE (*National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies*). As soon as he completed his studies, in 1957, he went back to Egypt.

1.2 Political Orientation

Samir Amin sees himself as a 'political animal' who cannot separate his intellectual path, his thinking, from his political struggles and decisions. Very early during his adolescence he had defined three positions which are inseparable in his opinion and which served as the foundation for his entire intellectual and political approach. His first standpoint was to reject the social injustice that he saw all around him in Egyptian society. He witnessed the striking contrast between the misery of the working classes and the arrogance, opulence and waste that characterized the lifestyle of the upper classes. This rejection was the starting point of his social revolt.

Secondly, the context of the Second World War played a very important role in the genesis of his ideas. He had adopted firm positions against fascism and Nazism. He had rejected the idea held by some Egyptians who considered that "the enemy of their enemy was their friend" and consequently thought that the enemy of Great Britain was their friend. Very early on, his resolute stance against Nazism and fascism fuelled his sympathy for the Soviet Union, which had a decisive role in the fall of Hitler and of the Nazi regime.

The upheaval against British domination in Egypt and in other countries of the region was the third decisive factor in the *definition* of his thinking.

His positions always remained the same, however, and they were reinforced during his studies in Paris, immediately after the war. He had indeed actively

participated in the anti-colonialist movements of the time. This led him to join the *French Communist Party* (PCF) and he became a fervent supporter.

His ideas and political position were also strongly influenced by the 1955 Asian–African Bandoeng Conference and the nationalization of the Suez Canal by President Gamal Nasser in 1956. In fact, this nationalization encouraged him to postpone the defence of his PhD thesis, which was ready in June 1956, so that he could take part in the political unrest. In 1957 he finally defended his thesis and immediately afterwards left for Egypt, where he immersed himself in the very tense political climate linked to the nationalization of the Canal, the 1956 war, the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement, and so on.

Samir Amin. Photograph from the personal photo collection of the author

1.3 Professional Activities

For Samir Amin, three activities have always been connected: work in economic mana-gement, teaching and research, and political struggle. He thinks that this combination is advantageous compared to purely political activities, to solely academic activities, or to exclusively technocratic activity within public administration.

1.4 The Egyptian Experience

His return to Egypt in 1957, after defending his thesis in Paris, coincided with a time of extensive nationalization in his country. His first job was, as he says himself, “in the bureaucracy–technocracy of the national administration”, that is, in public sector administration. This job essentially consisted in ensuring the state’s representation

on the boards of directors of public sector companies. In their role of state representative, he and his colleagues had to take on the work of the board of directors, while respecting the directions given by the Plan, in other words the orientation of macroeconomic policy. This experience taught him amongst other things how to translate macroeconomic orientation into microeconomic political choices in companies.

Nevertheless, this experience took place under very difficult conditions. Samir Amin had already joined the Communist Party, which was clandestine. The director of the Economic Management Organization, where he worked and which was in charge of the public sector, was a communist himself. A great wave of arrests, including that of his director, took place in 1959. Afterwards, he kept his job for 1 year and continued as an underground communist militant. However, in January 1960, he left Egypt for France.

1.5 The Parisian Experience

Thanks to his activism during his studies in France between 1947 and 1957 Samir Amin had good connections in the communist and anti-colonialist spheres, and these turned out to be very useful. He was indeed a very active militant in the *l'Union Nationale des Étudiants de France* (UNEF) (National Union of French Students), in the Communist Party, and also in a number of anti-colonialist student movements which were well represented in Paris at this time, such as those for Arab states, including Egypt, and those for Asian or African countries, which counted among their members people from Vietnam, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.

In this context, he met many of those who were to become the first political leaders of post-independence French-speaking sub-Saharan Africa, as well as young Middle Eastern men, such as Syrians and Iraqis, who were very numerous in France at the time.

While in Paris, he worked for 6 months for the *Service des Etudes Économiques et Financières* (SEEF) (Department of Economic and Financial Studies). This experience was very instructive for him since it was then that he really learnt in concrete terms about macroeconomy in a context of planning. But he did not want to stay in Paris and wished to join a country where he could continue holding a politically useful job while respecting his deeply-rooted convictions. Therefore, after SEEF, which was his second practical experience and very different from his previous post in Egypt, he opted for Mali where he lived from 1960 to 1963.

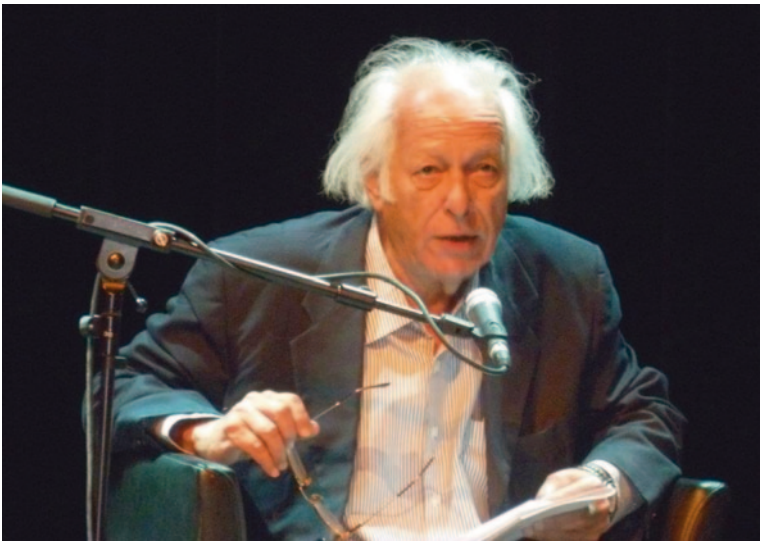
1.6 The Malian Experience

His decision to move to Mali was influenced by the new left-wing orientation of the country with the coming to power of President Modibo Keïta in 1960. He settled in Bamako as an expert (he distances himself from this title by using 'scare quotes') for the Malian Ministry of Planning. He worked with prominent

French economists such as Jean Bénard and Charles Bettelheim. Samir Amin was in charge, with his Malian colleagues, of the implementation of the Plan. He served in this capacity for 3 years, from 1960 to 1963. He learnt a lot in the course of this third experience. However, it looked as if some of the mistakes he had witnessed in Egypt were being repeated in the same manner, and he considered this very negative in the longer-term perspective. He believed that macroeconomic choices were less and less socially progressive, and took the longer-term prospect into account less and less. Development for whom? Development for what?

Another mistake that he detected in Mali was an increasingly strong tendency to talk about policies that aimed at 'closing the gap', because, in his opinion, there was no possibility of 'closing the gap' within the dominant system. This obsession with 'closing the gap' had encouraged Malian leaders to place emphasis on maximizing growth, no matter that social conditions were deteriorating and even if this meant in particular a complete scorn for democracy: not just for political democracy, flouted by the single-party system, but also for social democracy, that is to say real participation by workers in the decision-making process. These trends motivated his departure from Mali after a three-year practical stay which had been a thrilling experience rich in lessons.

Despite the passage of time since then, Samir Amin's stay in Mali has left a lasting impression and abiding memories. He was the guest of honour during the fiftieth anniversary of Malian independence there in September 2010. Ceremonies were organized in his honour both by the party currently in power and by the party of former President Modibo Keïta. Tributes were also paid by



Samir Amin. Photograph from the personal photo collection of the author

civil society, notably by the *Forum for Another Mali* (FORAM), led by Mrs Aminata Dramane Traoré, former Minister of Culture. All the ceremonies were as much expressions of gratitude as a token of appreciation for the quality of Samir Amin's work in the construction of the new republic in the early days of its independence.

Although he definitively abandoned his functions as a 'bureaucrat' after he left Mali, Samir Amin continued to act as an adviser for several governments in the global South and for African and international institutions. Countries such as China, Vietnam, Algeria, Venezuela, and Bolivia have benefited and continue to benefit from his reflection and advice.

1.7 Teaching and Research

After his experience in Mali, Samir Amin decided to definitely dedicate himself to a career in academia. He brilliantly passed the *agrégation* (a competitive examination) in economics and began a career as professor and researcher in several universities, including the universities of Dakar and of Vincennes, now known as Paris VIII–Saint-Denis. He has very positive memories of this latter establishment, where he says that after the student protests of 1968 one of the best experiments aiming at rethinking the entire teaching of social sciences and humanities in depths was launched.

But teaching goes hand in hand with research, that is, intellectual production. His intellectual production never stopped developing in the fields of economic theory, of practical development problems, and of theories concerning the struggle against imperialism and for independence and autonomy for the countries of the South.

1.8 The IDEP Experience

The African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (*Institut Africain de Développement Economique et de Planification*—IDEP) holds great importance in Samir Amin's career as a teacher and researcher. With the blessing, or even complicity, of some UNDP leaders in New York, such as Robert Gardnier, who was executive secretary of the *Economic Commission for Africa* (ECA) for 10 years, Samir Amin developed the Institute in order to create a centre of excellence for reflection and training. Activities were varied and included, for example, deployment to a country for a month or two to work with public servants from the Ministry of Planning or with other ministries dealing with economics, as well as with students and university teachers of the country. Teams were formed to discuss the essence of problems as well as the design of economic policies to face them.

On the basis of the vivid memories of all those who came by the Institute at this time, one can say that Samir Amin's time at IDEP left an indelible impression.

1.9 The ENDA, CODESRIA and FTM Experience

Before leaving IDEP, Samir Amin had made the necessary arrangements for the future by creating several institutions within the Institute. Initially he had founded them as programmes of IDEP, in order to get them their first funding. However, his plan was to transform them into independent entities once they were able to raise their own funds.

One of these institutions is *Environment and Development Action in Africa* (ENDA), which later became *ENDA Third World*. This institution has grown and seized its independence. It has spread beyond the frontiers of the African continent, with offices in Latin America and Asia.

Another institution was the *Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa* (CODESRIA), conceived on the model of the *Latin American Council for Social Sciences* (CLACSO). CODESRIA was structured as a kind of federating body for institutes and research centres from or linked to universities, in order to organize a systematic debate on the essence of problems and challenges in all their dimensions. CODESRIA became a larger research institute with international influence, bringing together universities and research centres on the continent, and establishing close contacts with similar institutions in Latin America and Asia.

1.10 Intellectual Production

Samir Amin's time at IDEP and the foundation of CODESRIA are milestones in his research, his intellectual production, one of his core concerns. In his intellectual production, he has focused on a harsh critique of the capitalist/imperialist system; on the deconstruction of conventional concepts of analysis; on unfailing support for political, economic and cultural emancipation of the countries of the South; and on the defence of socialism as the only alternative to capitalism and its horrors. As mentioned above, for Samir Amin intellectual and political struggles are inseparable, because as a fundamentally intellectual being, he cannot limit himself to explaining the world and its atrocities but can rather highlight and participate in struggles aimed at changing the world. In this perspective he remains true to the teachings of Marx who wrote in one of the famous "Theses on Feuerbach" that philosophers must not only try to explain the world but rather devote themselves to transforming it.

There is no doubt that Samir Amin contributed, as much as, if not more than, other prominent economists of the South to questioning the notion of

Samir Amin. *Source* Photograph from the personal photo collection of the author

"development" as it was understood by conventional economists in the early 1960s, and especially to disputing the dominant discourse on why the development of countries of the South, and Africa in particular, were lagging behind. A core aspect of Samir Amin's work, since his PhD thesis, was to demonstrate the indissoluble link between 'development' and 'underdevelopment'.

Samir Amin was among the first economists of the South to refute in a coherent and well-argued manner the conventional theses on why the South is lagging behind. In his opinion, capitalism is a world system comprising the so-called 'developed' capitalist countries and the so-called 'underdeveloped' countries of the South. This position, already expressed in his PhD thesis, had attracted a lot of attention and stimulated debate both in the countries of the South and of the North. His later writings only confirmed these views, which were to be reinforced by those of other economists, notably those of the Latin American school and of Immanuel Wallerstein and the 'world system'.

Samir Amin's work is marked by key ideas that guide his fight against capitalism, for the emancipation of the people of the South from the capitalist/imperialist yoke, and for economic and social transformation on the long transitional path to socialism.

1.11 Capitalism as a Global System

In order to understand Samir Amin's reasoning, one must keep in mind that he adheres to a Marxist concept of the history of human societies. Such a concept is by far superior to a conventional bourgeois analysis, since it is a holistic approach of the problems in social formations. In his opinion, economy cannot be separated

from politics and from social issues. This position was already seen in his PhD thesis, in which he used tools developed by Marxism to analyse capitalist accumulation conceived on a global scale.

On the basis of this analysis, he affirmed that capitalism and its evolution could only be understood as a single and unique global system, composed of 'developed countries', which constitute the Cores, and of 'underdeveloped countries', which are the Peripheries of the system. The origin and the nature of this polarization has occupied him in his entire intellectual output. Development and underdevelopment consequently constitute both facets of the unique expansion of global capitalism. Underdeveloped countries should not be considered as lagging behind because of the specific—social, cultural, or even geographic—characteristics of these so-called 'poor' countries. Underdevelopment is actually only the result of the forced permanent structural adjustment of these countries to the needs of the accumulation benefiting the system's Core countries.

The conceptualization of capitalism as a global system is the guiding thread of Samir Amin's thinking, including that concerning the socialist experience in the former USSR, in China, and in other countries.

1.12 Capitalism and Imperialism

Furthermore, he believes that capitalism and imperialism are intimately linked at all stages of their development. Contrary to Lenin, who argued that imperialism was a specific stage in the development of capitalism, Samir Amin asserts that capitalism is imperialist by nature and that, consequently, imperialism is a much more ancient phenomenon, from the conquest of the Americas during the sixteenth century to the move to monopoly capitalism. Imperialism is according to him not in the least a recent phenomenon linked to monopoly capitalism as at the end of the nineteenth century. For him, the world expansion of capitalism is associated with a polarization at all stages of its development. In other words, the polarization between Cores and Peripheries is a phenomenon inherent in historical capitalism. With this statement, he admits nonetheless that capitalism and imperialism have gone through different phases with their own specificities. The forms of the Cores–Peripheries polarization, as well as the forms of expression of imperialism, have thus changed and evolved—but always towards an aggravation of the polarization and not towards its mitigation.

Nowadays, Samir Amin states that we are witnessing the transformation of capitalism into a capitalism of generalized monopolies and the concomitant transformation of imperialism into a collective imperialism personified by the triad of the United States, Japan, and the European Union and by their (military, economic and financial) tools such as the *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (NATO), the World Bank, the *International Monetary Fund* (IMF), and the *World Trade Organization* (WTO).

This triad enjoys the monopoly of five advantages (weapons of mass destruction; mass communication systems; monetary and financial systems; technologies;

and access to natural resources) that it wishes to keep at any cost. For this reason, it has engaged in the militarization of the world in order to avoid losing these monopolies. Wars of aggression against the populations of the Middle East, threats against other sovereign states, NATO interventions under the guidance of the United States army, the alleged war on terror, the campaign led by the United States to establish the headquarters of AFRICOM in Africa, are all examples of this will of collective imperialism to use force in order to preserve its hegemony, which is today greatly threatened by the rise of the so-called 'emerging' states.

1.13 Polarization and Ways Toward Emancipation for the South

From this conception of capitalism as a global system, as seen above, flows the questioning of the conventional analysis of 'underdevelopment'. On the basis of this analysis, Samir Amin has worked to deconstruct the dominant discourse on the origin of the 'underdevelopment' of the countries of the South. This deconstruction starts with the rejection of the superficial explanation of 'underdevelopment' based on an economicist analysis. On the contrary, Samir Amin shifts the debate to a broader field, the field of historical materialism, and emphasizes that the study of development problems is inseparable from the history of social formations. With this consideration as a starting point, the 'underdevelopment' of the countries of the South, and especially of Africa, must be understood as the logical consequence of the deployment of capitalism on a global scale.

This analysis is shared by the Latin American school, personified by Raul Prebisch, who later became the first secretary-general of the *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development* (UNCTAD), as well as by many other renowned economists (the Latin American 'Dependencia' school). The meetings between Samir Amin and the main thinkers of this school of thought was a stimulating time, characterized by an in-depth critique of the nature of capitalism, the questioning of conventional notions of development and underdevelopment, and a new interpretation of the role of trade in relations between the Cores and the Peripheries.

Samir Amin wrote some of his most well-known works during this period of intense theoretical debate. As well as Accumulation on a world scale (1970), one can mention *L'échange inégal et la loi de la valeur* (Unequal exchange and the law of value) (1973), Unequal development (1976), Imperialism and unequal development (1976), expanded as *L'échange inégal et la loi de la valeur* (Imperialism and under-development in Africa) (1988), The law of value and historical materialism (1978), etc.

In these works, Samir Amin forcefully states that the emancipation of the so-called 'underdeveloped' countries can neither happen while respecting the logic of the globalized capitalist system nor within this system. The South would not be able to catch up in such a capitalist context because of the system's inherent

polarization. This belief led Samir Amin to assign significant importance to the project adopted by the Asian–African countries at the Bandoeng (Indonesia) Conference in 1955.

1.14 The Bandoeng Project

For Samir Amin, this experience represented a major turning point for two main reasons. The first was that for the first time, countries of the South, and not the least important ones, had decided to defy the existing global order and the hegemonic system inherited from the Second World War. In other words, Bandoeng was an attempt at a coordinated reply by the countries of the South to the challenges of the imperialist system of the time.

Moreover, and this is probably the most important factor for Samir Amin, Bandoeng determined the cornerstones of a national autonomous project, albeit a bourgeois project, but one which had a profound impact in the countries of the South. According to him, and probably to many other analysts, Bandoeng's influence was broad, giving birth among others to the Non-Aligned Movement and defining the key elements that led the countries of the South to demand the institution of a *New International Economic Order* (NIEO) in the 1970s.

For this reason, Samir Amin calls this time stretching from 1955 to 1980 the 'Bandoeng period', which he also named the "Awakening of the South", the title of the book he dedicated to the political and economic developments that took place in the countries of the South.

Despite its limits and its loss of vigour, the Bandoeng project represents, in Samir Amin's opinion, the path to follow in attempts that could lead to a real emancipation of the countries of the South. For him, this real emancipation can obviously only take place within a context disconnected from the global capitalist system in order to open the way for the long transition to socialism.

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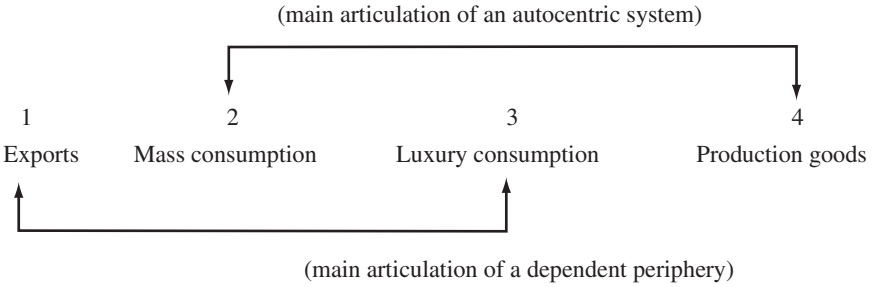
Part II
Texts by Samir Amin on the Theory of Historical Capitalism

Samir Amin. Photograph from the personal photo collection of the author

Chapter 3
Theoretical Model of Capital Accumulation and Development in the Contemporary World

The aim of this study is to show that there is a basic difference between the model of the accumulation of capital and economic and social development that is characteristic of an autocentric system and that of a system in the periphery. This difference—that we consider to be absolutely fundamental—having been highlighted, it is in the general theoretical framework that we shall try to relocate questions of social structure as well as the diverse aspects that are essential to the problems of the contemporary world, both social (particularly that of unemployment, under-employment and marginalization) as well as ideological and political (especially problems of social consciousness, class consciousness, problems of planning, the mobilization of resources and people, problems of education and its social role etc.).

The diagram below 'sums up' abstractly the difference—from this viewpoint—between an autocentric system and a peripheral one:



The economic system is divided into four sectors that can be considered either from the production angle or from that of the distribution of the active population involved in the production activities as described.

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3.1 The Determining Articulation in an Autocentric System

The determining articulation in an autocentric system is the one linking sector 2 (the production of mass consumption goods) to sector 4 (the production of industrial plant that enables the production of sector 2). This determining articulation has indeed been characteristic of the historical development of capitalism at the centre of the system (in Europe, North America and Japan). It therefore illustrates abstractly the 'pure' mode of capitalist production and has been analyzed as such, in Marx's *Capital.* It can also be shown that the development processes of the USSR and China have also been based on this articulation, although the forms, as far as China is concerned, are original.

Marx does indeed show that in the world of capitalist production there is an *objective* relationship (that is to say, *necessary*) between the rate of surplus value and the level of development of the productive forces. The rate of surplus value essentially determines the structure and social distribution of the revenue (its division between the wage earners and the surplus value that takes the form of profit and hence, that of demand (as it is the wage earners who constitute most of the demand for mass consumption goods, the profits are totally or partially 'saved' with a view to being 'invested'). The level of development of the productive forces is expressed in the social division of labour: the allocation of the work force, in appropriate proportions, to sections 2 and 4 (sections 2 and 1 in Marx's reproduction model). This objective relation, although fundamental in *Capital*, has often been 'forgotten', particularly in the debate on the tendency of the rate of profit to diminish. The argument, often put forward, that the increase in the organic composition of capital can be compensated by that of the rate of surplus value loses it coherence as soon as one realizes that the contradiction between the capacity of the system to produce and its capacity to consume—inherent in the capitalist mode of production—is constantly being overcome and this explains the objective character of the relationship between the rate of surplus value and the level of development of the productive forces. As we have so often emphasized, this theoretical model of accumulation is infinitely richer than all the subsequent empiricist models:

(1) because it reveals the origin of profit (which requires a prior theory of value) and get rid of economic rationality as an absolute quality, restoring it to its real status of rationality *in a system* and not rationality independent of the system, as Piero Sraffa has rediscovered so brilliantly[1]; (2) because it shows that the economic choices made in this system are necessarily sub-optimal, showing the ideological—i.e., non scientific—character of the marginalist constructions of 'general equilibrium'; and (3) because it demonstrates that the 'real wage' cannot be 'any old wage' and that it therefore gives an objective status to social power relationships.

[1] In *Production of Commodities by Means of Commodities,* Cambridge University Press, 1960.

The objective relation in question is expressed in the conjunctural fluctuations of activities and unemployment. An increase in the rate of surplus value above its objectively necessary level leads to a crisis, when there is insufficient effective demand. A reduction of this rate slows down economic growth and therefore creates labour conditions that are favourable for capital. As we have shown, this adjustment—which indeed corresponds to the history of the accumulation of the industrial revolution at the time of the 1930 crisis (a history marked by the economic cycle) is now more complex because the influence of this secondary effect in wage variations on the choice of techniques is responsible for the suboptimal character of the economic system. The tendency towards full employment (which does not exclude but, on the contrary, involves a small margin of permanent unemployment) as well as substantial conjunctural fluctuations of unemployment show how this system functions. The internal transformations of contemporary capitalism have removed the functionality of this adjustment mechanism. The monopolization of capital on the one hand and the organization of workers at the national level on the other, made *possible* 'planning' that was aimed at reducing conjunctural fluctuations. If the working class accept to operate in this framework, which is the system by which, under the leadership of the State, capital and labour accept a 'social contract' linking growth of the real wage to that of productivity (in given data which is calculated by the 'technocrats') almost stable full employment can be guaranteed.

Except that obviously some sectors of the society can, by refusing the 'contract', cause trouble. This is especially the case of the small and medium enterprises who will be the ones to suffer from the concentration and who can—especially in relatively backward structures—carry out more or less effective political blackmail. Also except that foreign relations are not subject to this kind of planning. The contradiction is growing between the global character of production—illustrated by the increasing weight of the multinational corporations—and the continuing national character of institutions, both capital and labour. The social-democrat ideology expressed in this type of social contract, is limited by the borders of the national state.

Schematic as this model may seem—it is evidently an abstraction of reality—it nevertheless captures the essence of the system. In this model, foreign relations are made abstract, which means, not that the development of capitalism operates in an autarchic national framework, but that the essential relations in the system can be grasped by making an abstraction of them. Besides, the foreign relations of the developed regions as a whole with the periphery of the world system remain quantitatively marginal in comparison with the internal flows within the centre. These relations, furthermore, help primitive accumulation, and not expanded reproduction and it is for this reason such abstraction is valid.

The historically *relative* character of the distinction between mass consumption goods and luxury goods is also apparent here. The demand from wage earners expands with economic growth—the progress of the productive forces. While, at the outset of capitalist history this demand was almost exclusively made up of essential consumption—food, textiles, housing—it has now reached a more

advanced stage of development with products of consumer durables (cars, electric domestic appliances, etc.). This development of the type of 'mass' products is of decisive importance for understanding the problem that concerns us. The structure of the demand at the beginning of the system was such that it favoured the agricultural revolution as it provided an outlet for food products for the *domestic market* (historically this transformation of agriculture took the form of agrarian capitalism). Then, as we know, the textile industry and urbanization played a historical role (hence the saying "when [building] construction is doing well, everything is doing well". On the other hand, the consumer durables—as their production takes up much capital and skilled labour—developed late when productivity in agriculture and the industries producing non-durable goods had already reached decisive stages.

3.2 The Main Articulation in the Peripheral Model

The model of accumulation and economic and social development in the periphery of the world system has virtually nothing in common with the one outlined above.

At its origin we find the setting up—under the stimulus from the centre—of an export sector that was to play a determining role in the creation and shaping of the market. We will not advance much further by perpetually repeating the platitude that the products exported by the periphery are primary minerals and agricultural products, for which this or that region in the periphery has some natural advantage (abundant minerals or tropical produce). The ultimate *reason* that creates an export sector lies in the answer to the question about the conditions that make it 'profitable'. National capital is in no way obliged to emigrate because of insufficient outlets in the centre. However, it will emigrate towards the periphery if it is more profitable to do so. The equalization of the rate of profit will distribute the benefits from this higher income and make the export of capital appear to be a way of combatting the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. Obtaining from the periphery the products that constitute the basic elements of constant capital (raw materials) and variable capital (food products) at costs of production that are lower to those of analogous products in the centre (or, evidently, substitutes in the case of specific products like coffee or tea): this is the *reason* for creating this export sector.

It is therefore here that the necessary theory of *unequal exchange* has to be introduced. The products exported by the periphery are interesting to the extent that—*ceteris paribus*—and here this expression means *equality in productivity*—labour costs can be inferior to those in the centre. They can be so because the society will be subjected by all possible means—economic and non-economic—to adapt to its new function: supplying cheap labour to the export sector.

This is not the place to develop the history of the shaping of the periphery to the requirements of the centre. We have also done this when we distinguished the stages of development of capitalism (mercantilism, competitive industrialism without capital exportation, financial capitalism of the monopolies with capital

exportation) on the one hand and, on the other hand, the different regions of the Third World' (Latin America, Africa, Asia). We shall just say that once a society—which has become in this sense dependent—has been subjected to this new function, it loses its 'traditional' character because it is obviously not the function of genuinely traditional societies (i.e., pre-capitalist) only to supply cheap labour to capitalism! All the problems of transforming so-called traditional societies must be re-considered in this context, without reference to 'dualism', that is to say at the supposed juxtaposition of an autonomous 'traditional' society and an extension of 'modern' society.

For, while in this model and at this stage there is no real articulation between the export sector and 'the rest of the economy', society is subjected to the principal requirement of supplying cheap labour to the export sector. The main articulation characterizing the accumulation process at the centre—through the existence of an objective relationship between the cost of labour and the level of development of the productive forces—completely disappears. Wage remuneration in the export sector will therefore be as low as economic, social *and political* conditions allow. As for the level of development of the productive forces, it would be heterogeneous in this case (whereas it is homogeneous in the autocentric model): advanced (and sometimes very advanced), in the export sector and backward in 'the rest of the economy'. This backwardness—maintained by the system—is the condition that enables the export sector to benefit from cheap labour.

In these conditions, the domestic market engendered by the development of the export sector will be limited and biased. The narrow nature of this market is to be explained by the fact that the periphery attracts only a limited amount of capital from the centre, even though it offers greater profits. The contradiction between the capacity to consume and the capacity to produce is overcome at the level of the world system as a whole (centre and periphery) by enlarging the market at the centre, with the periphery—fully deserving of its name—functioning only in a marginal, subordinate and limited way. This dynamic leads to a growing polarization of wealth to the benefit of the centre.

Nevertheless, based on a certain extension of the export sector, there was a domestic market made its appearance. In comparison with the market engendered in the central process, this market is biased—relatively speaking—against the demand for mass consumer goods, and—relatively speaking—in favour of that for 'luxury' goods. If all the invested capital in the export sector was foreign, and if all the profits of this capital were re-exported back to the centre, the domestic market would in fact be limited for mass consumer goods, all the more limited by the low remuneration of labour. But, in fact, part of this capital is local. In addition, the methods used to ensure this low remuneration are based on the reinforcement of different local and parasitical social strata that function as a conveyor belt*: latifundistas* here, kulaks there, commercial compradors or State bureaucratic bourgeoisie, etc. The domestic market will therefore be *mainly* on the demand for 'luxury' goods of these social strata.

It is this specific articulation—which is expressed by the export sector/luxury goods link—that is characteristic of the periphery model dependent on

accumulation and economic and social development. Industrialization, through the substitution of imports, will thus start at 'the end', that is by making products that correspond to the more advanced stages of development of the centre, the 'durable' goods. As we have already said, these products consume huge amounts of capital and rare resources (such as skilled labour, etc.). As a result there is a *basic distorsion* in allocating resources in favour of these products, to the detriment of those in sector 2. This sector will be systematically penalized: it will not generate any 'demand' for its products and it will not attract any financial and human resources that enable it to modernize. Hence the stagnation of 'subsistence agriculture' is explained: its potential products are in low demand and it has no means of effecting a serious transformation in the allocation of scarce resources. All choices of 'development strategies' based on 'profitability', the structures for the distribution of revenue as well as the structures of price relative to those of demand being what they are, have necessarily led to this systematic distortion. The few 'industries' thus installed within this framework, will never become poles of development: on the contrary they will accentuate the inequality within the system, impoverishing most of the population (who are included, as 'producers', in sector 2). Indeed, they enable a still greater integration of the minority into the world system.

Seen from a social viewpoint, this model will lead to the specific phenomenon of the *marginalization* of the masses. By this we mean an ensemble of mass impoverishing mechanisms, which take various forms: the proletarianization of the small agricultural producers and artisans, rural semi-proletarianization and impoverishment without proletarianization of the organized peasants in village communities, urbanization and a massive increase in overt urban unemployment, under-employment, etc. Unemployment thus takes very different *forms* from those it took in the central development model: under-employment in general tends to grow rather than being relatively limited and stable—apart from conjunctural fluctuations. The *function* of unemployment and under-employment is thus different from its function in the central model: the weight of unemployment ensures a minimum remuneration of labour that is relatively rigid and blocked in both sector 1 and sector 3. Wages do not appear to be considered both as cost and income, creating a demand that is essential for the model, but only as a cost, the demand originating elsewhere: abroad or among the privileged social categories.

The 'extraverted' origin of the development which perpetuates itself in spite of the growing diversification of the economy, its industrialization, etc., is not an *original sin*, a *deus ex macchina* outside the model of peripheral dependent accumulation. This is because it is a model that reproduces the social and economic conditions for it to function. The marginalization of the masses is the very condition that enables the integration of a minority into the world system and a guarantee of growing income for that minority, which conditions the adoption by this minority of the 'European' consumer models. The extension of this consumer model guarantees the 'profitability' of sector 3, and strengthens the social, cultural, ideological and political integration of the privileged classes.

Thus, at this stage of the diversification and deepening of under-development, new mechanisms of domination/dependency develop—mechanisms that are cultural

and political. But also through economic mechanisms: technological dependency and the domination of transnational companies. In fact, sector 3 requires capital intensive investments that only the great transnational oligopolies can provide and they are the material support of technological dependency.

But also at this stage there appear more complex forms in ownership structure and economic management. Experience shows that in the industrialization process, the participation of local private capital through import substitution is often frequent, even if it is subordinate. It also shows that—at least in the large countries—there is a sufficient market created by the development of sectors 1 and 3 that can make the establishment of sector 4 feasible. This is often imposed by the State. However, the development of a basic industry and a public sector by no means ensures that the system will evolve towards a full-blown autocentric system. This is because sector 4 is at the service, not of the development of sector 2, but of that of sectors 1 and 3.

The analysis therefore poses the fundamental question: development for whom? If development only makes sense if it *integrates* the masses and their interests, the model of dependent peripheral accumulation leads to an impasse. A development strategy *for the masses* must be based on a fundamental revision of priorities in the allocation of resources and this implies rejecting the profitability rules of the system. This where the real meaning of a transition strategy lies. Transition is nothing else but the historical period of revising the model, of reversing its priorities, from a gradual move from the articulation 1–3–4 to the articulation 2–4. It must be seen from this angle and not simply of that of the 'forms' of the economy: industrial diversification *versus* mono-production of exports, public ownership *versus* foreign capital, etc.

The passage of the dependent, under-development model (based on the main articulation 1–3) towards a genuine, autonomous and autocentric development model (based on articulation 2–4) is the essential content of the *transition* issue. The integration into the world system of countries that have become under-developed is at the origin of a specific contradiction of the system that tends to become its main contradiction: on the one hand it created the objective conditions of a need for development, which is felt as such by the peoples of the periphery, but on the other hand it blocks the road for these countries to achieve a full-blown capitalist development, which was the historical response to the problem of accumulation, the precondition for socialism. This is why this specific contradiction has become the main contradiction, that is to say, the one that is expressed by a rupture towards a surpassing of the system.

This is nothing more than yet another expression of the *law of unequal development*, according to which systems are destroyed and overtaken first not in their central core but based on their peripheries that constitute the weak links of a chain: those that express the contradiction in its maximum intensity.

Chapter 4
Unity and Change in the Ideology of Political Economy

As with all social sciences, the history of economic theory has not proceeded along a course like that taken by the natural sciences. In the natural sciences new theories—fuller, more complex, more accurate—ultimately take the place of formerly dominant theories, which are then completely abandoned.[1] Of course, this development is shaped by conflicts among schools of thought, and sometimes the victory of a theory is but temporary. Nevertheless, as Kuhn has shown so well, the deepening of knowledge always ends up with the imposition of a new paradigm. The concept of science, closely linked to this progression, here takes on its full meaning.

Things stand quite differently in regard to knowledge of social reality, where schools of thought constantly oppose each other without ever attaining a definitive predominance. Such schools are defined by different—and sometimes diametrically opposed—conceptions of the real nature of their common object of analysis: society. And these oppositions transgress reality; they outlive all the changes in social reality itself. Of course, the best analysts in each of these schools are well aware of these changes and sharpen their observations and analytic techniques to take account of the new questions posed, but even so they always remain within the bounds of their own chosen paradigm.

This difference, then, characterises the different status of scientific analysis in the fields of nature and society: it reminds us that human beings, as individuals and as social actors, make their own history, while they can merely observe the history of the natural world. In regard to society, science (in the sense of a respect for facts) and ideology (in the sense of a point of view justifying social conservatism or social transformation) are inseparable. And that is why I prefer to speak of 'social thought' (without implying any evasion of the requirements of scientific method) rather than of 'social science'.

Concerning modern history of capitalism, we have had for the last two centuries two opposing lines of argument, and never will the partisans of one of them succeed in convincing those of the other. On one side is the conservative line of

[1] This text was first published as Chap. 2, in: *Spectres of Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998). The copyright for this text belongs to the author.

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discourse, which justifies the capitalist social order, and on the other is that of socialism with its radical critique of that order. This is not to say that they dispute in a circle, tirelessly repeating the same arguments. For the capitalism about which they argue is itself in constant evolution, and at each of its phases the requirements for its further development call for different policies. The most interesting point of view within the conservative (pro-capitalist) current is that which succeeds in justifying these necessary policies and in showing the most effective means for their implementation. On the other side of the tracks, the social problems created by this development are themselves changed, some lessening or vanishing, others newly arising or becoming intensified; the most effective point of view within the radically critical current is that which best sizes up the new challenges.

Social thought, accordingly, is always closely linked to the question of social power, either by justifying a given established system of power or by challenging it by proposing a different one. Among the entirety of conceptions making up bourgeois thought, that one which responds best to the demands posed by the particular phase of capitalist development under consideration easily wins its place of intellectual dominance; it becomes the 'single thought' of the moment. In contrast, ideological pluralism tends to be the rule to the extent that the intellectual critique of capitalism relates only oppositionally to established power.

Nevertheless, precisely because there was, from 1917 to 1990, a really existing system of established power claiming the status of socialist alternative, a dominant social ideology, inextricably linked to the Soviet power structure was also imposed within the socialist ranks. An alternative 'single thought', expressed in language inspired by vulgar Marxism, coexisted with the succeeding forms of capitalist single thought—liberal nationalist, Keynesian, neoliberal globalist—that have held the stage during this period. With the collapse of the Soviet alternative, the 'single thought' of 'really existing socialism' vanished. Into its place have swarmed radical critiques of a diverse scope. These have not yet crystallised into coherent alternative projects, formulated as renewed systems of critical thought that would be sufficiently powerful to give effective answers to the challenges of the contemporary world. The bourgeois single thought of the moment thus holds universal sway, without the need to share that influence as it did during the period of ideological dualism. However, this is not a new situation: dominant bourgeois thought, in the forms appropriate to the requirements of the 1800–1914 expansion of capitalism, was also, by and large, the universal single thought for each successive stage of that expansion.

Thus the dominant line of thought of capitalism is displayed as a succession of forms which, beyond the diversity of their modalities of expression, remain organised around an unchanging core of basic conceptions and methods. To point out the permanence of this hard core and to identify the real scope of the successive and varied modalities of capitalist discourse is to understand both what is permanent in capitalism and what is specific to each phase in its blossoming. Thus we can see the place of each successive 'single thought' in the history of capitalist society.

The characteristic ideology of capitalism has always been economic determinist. This gives a dominant position to the subject matter of what has become

economic theory. Yet this (and the autonomy that economic theory derives from it) does not fully comprise it. For it is also the product of a social and political philosophy that underlies the concept of individual freedom and defines the limits within which modern political democracy is practised. The characteristics and contradictions of conventional economic theory flow from this ambiguous position in the ideological rhetoric of capitalism. Indeed, this economic theory is strung out between two extreme positions. At one pole its practitioners seek to construct a 'pure economics' (according to their own terminology) that follows only its own self-contained set of laws, free from such dimensions of social reality as the organisation of societies as nations, political practice, and state intervention. This perpetual tendency in conventional economic theory thus seeks to formulate a rigorous theory (by its own specific criteria) of how a general equilibrium is produced through the self-regulating nature of the market. But at its other pole these economists choose deliberately to put themselves at the service of the really existing power structure, in order to suggest effective actions to regulate the market and to enhance their nation's position in the world system. However, these really existing power structures are not at all identical to each other irrespective of space and time. To say that they all maintain the power of the bourgeoisie is quite insufficient, even though the statement is not false. For this power is imposed through hegemonic social coalitions specific to particular countries and historical periods, a fact which requires state policies that maintain the compromises among social classes that define such coalitions. Economic theory is then formulated in terms suited to these objectives, and stays far away from the abstract preoccupations of pure economics.

The single thought is generally expressed through successive formulations of this second type, with 'pure economics' relegated to the status of academic palaver without any bearing on real life. The fact- remains that at certain exceptional times—and the grounds for these exceptions demand explanation—the single thought comes close to the propositions of pure economics or even merges into them. We are currently in one of those periods.

I will not at this point hark back to the reasons why the capitalist worldview is naturally economic determinist. This characteristic follows from an objective requirement, without which capitalism cannot function: the inversion of the relation between politics and economics characteristic of precapitalist social systems so that politics becomes subordinate to economics. This objective requirement creates the space for the establishment of an 'economic science', whose laws govern the preproduction process of capitalist society which really appears—and it is in this that it breaks with its past—to be determined by those laws. It is this reversal of the relationship between politics and economics that of necessity demands the formulation of 'pure economic theory'.

Nor will I dwell long on the history of this theory's establishment. It took place just as soon as capitalism—with the industrial revolution at the start of the nineteenth century—took on its completed form. It was at first expressed in a clumsy form that (as in Bastiat) represented little more than unconditional praise for the 'market'—a form that Marx for this very reason rightly termed vulgar economics.

Later, mathematical techniques would be used (as in Walras) to express the interdependence of markets in a theory of general equilibrium.

To show that capitalism can function (that it does function is a matter of fact) is not the sole concern of this theory, which remains the inescapable hard core of capitalist rhetoric. It is equally necessary to prove that this rational functioning answers to the expectations of individuals and peoples, which in turn makes capitalism not only legitimate but even 'eternal.' It represents 'the end of history'. Such a proof necessarily requires re-establishment of the linkage between Economic theory and social and political philosophy. Economic discourse would thus be enriched to become the general discourse of capitalism, transcending the economic basis of its argument.

The relationship linking conventional economic theory to its underlying social philosophy spreads over numerous subjects. I will here deal with two of them, the theory of value and the concept of individual freedom.

The choice to base the concept of value on social labour or on individual and subjective estimation of utility is itself the result of the opposition between two concepts of social reality. The second of these choices, which became crystallised into a theory of pure economics only at a late stage, after (and in response to) Marx, defines society as a collection of individuals, nothing more. It seems to me that, despite being formulated in ever more sophisticated ways, the attempt to formulate on this basis the. «theorems that would allow proof both that the system functions and reproduces itself (general equilibrium) and that it simultaneously is the best possible (by maximising individual gratifications), fails to reach its objective. But that is not what concerns us here. In contrast, the first choice, because it is based on measurable quantities, has fed into a succession of positivist depictions of capitalist reality, from Walrasian general equilibrium which has been taken up again and reformulated by Maurice Allais (in an attempt to synthesise the positive interdependence of markets with subjective valuation) to the purely positivist system of Piero Sraffa.

The positivist mentality inspiring the evolution of this current within conventional economic theory allows for the possibility of communication between the economic discourse of capitalism and that of its critics, or at least, as we will see further on, with one possible line of critical thought.

No less important is the relationship between the theory of pure economics, in all its variants, and the bourgeois philosophy of individual freedom. We here have a philosophy that was produced by the bourgeoisie both as an act of self-affirmation in the face of the *ancien regime* and as the basis of its own social and economic system. Thus system is of course not summed up by the single notion of individual freedom, although it holds a decisive position in economic theory. *Homo economicus* is a free individual who chooses whether to sell his labour or refrain from work, whether to innovate or to conform, whether to buy or to sell. The exercise of such freedom requires that society be organised on the basis of generalised markets—for labour, for products, for business firms.

This principle has as a logical consequence that social reality should produce all the conditions, and only the conditions, for the exercise of this freedom—in

other words, this logic rejects as irrational any association of these individuals into communities (for example, into nations), rejects the historically constituted state, and even, as we will see, rejects private property. Under these conditions all the individuals comprising the population of the planet can meet in the marketplace to negotiate their mutual relationships on terms of perfect equality, since none of them would hold a privileged position through ownership of even the smallest capital. A state/administration/back positioned above these individuals, on a world scale of course, would be charged with managing this generalised marketplace. Would-be entrepreneurs would propose their projects for its judgement. The state/bank would lend capital to those favoured by its judgement. Other individuals would negotiate the sale of their labour to these entrepreneurs, and all products would be bought and sold by fully informed participants on open markets. This logic, when pushed to an extreme, frightens defenders of capitalism, and for this reason it is rarely expressed (although Walras, like his successor Allais, did begin to give it consideration). In contrast, some social thinkers critical of capitalism found themselves comfortable with this logic. They accordingly have imagined a market that would be planned in this way so as to be perfect, unlike that of really existing capitalism—and, what is more, would be perfectly equitable because it would be based on the equality of all citizens (of a single country or of the world). This sort of socialism, of which Barone was a theoretical precursor, looks very much like capitalism—a capitalism without (private) capitalists or, more exactly, without hereditary owners of capital. But it belongs within that line of critical thought which does not call into question capitalism's inherent economic determinism (the alienated form of economic life inseparable from the market). This tendency likewise accepts the arguments of the positivist general-equilibrium analysis as expressed in labour-value terms. In this way it provided elements for the conception of what was to become socialist economic planning. We will return to this point later.

The bourgeois conception of individual freedom as accepted by pure economics (whether capitalist or socialist) is that of right- wing anarchism—hostile to the state, to organisations (including trade unions), and, in principle, to monopolies. It thus has wide appeal among small businessmen and, as is well known, was a component in the attraction of the 1920s fascist and protofascist movements for these confused sections of the middle class. But it can also turn into statism, as was the case for all historic forms of fascism. These waverings stem from the fact that 'pure economics' (and the 'market-governed society' inspired by it) is a utopia. It is, in reality, dependent on hypotheses that exclude all those aspects of really existing capitalism that trouble its rhetoric, such as states, nations, social classes, and global interdependencies, just as it abstracts from the exclusive ownership of the means of production by a minority, from the forms of real competition (like oligppolies), and from the rules limiting access to the use of natural resources. But reality, excluded from this ideological discourse, gets its own back and, in the end, prevails.

Behind the abstract discourse on pure market economics lurks a real, and very different, model of the market. This model, to begin with, is dualistic: integrated

in its three dimensions (markets for products, labour, and capital) at the national level, but curtailed and reduced to only two of these three (markets for products and capital, but not for labour) at the global level. Accordingly, this duality manifests as conflict among nations within the global system and so compels the rhetoric of right- wing anarchism to merge into that of nationalism. Moreover, the economic determinist alienation at the source of the capitalist utopia we are discussing likewise leads to treating natural resources as mere objects of market trading, with all the consequences that follow from this reduction.

Because pure capitalism does not exist, and because really existing capitalism is not an approximation of it but an altogether different sort of thing, the theorems characteristic of pure economics are meaningless and its behavioural rules and propositions have no application. So our ideologues have to accept that contesting states and nations exist, that competition is oligopolistic, that the distribution of property determines the distribution of income, and so forth. To hold onto the rehetoric of pure economics, they extend it with proposals for concrete economic policies that allegedly meet the criteria for a 'second best' optimisation, even though they are nothing of the sort. These proposals quite simply express the demands of politicians at the service of interests whose very existence pure economics denies in principle: the nation, the ruling classed, or some ruling-class faction, depending on the balance of social power characterising one or another stage in the history of capitalism.

It must thus be understood that the bourgeois single thought generally does not take on the extreme, virtually absurd, forms of the capitalist utopia. This single thought is expressed most frequently, and most forcefully, in realistic forms appropriate to concrete situations. It brings together the market, the state, and the nation to serve the social compromises needed for the functioning of coalitions among dominant class interests.

I am not going to put forward here a history of the successive forms of the capitalist single thought. I will merely consider a few of its broad features, relevant to the modern period.

From the latter part of the nineteenth century from about 1880—when monopoly capitalism became established—in the sense given that term by Hobson, Hilferding, and Lenin—to 1945, the capitalist single thought could well be called 'monopolistic nationalist liberalism.' 'Liberalism' here signifies a double affirmation: affirmation on the one hand of the predominant role of markets (oligopolistic markets, to be sure) in a self-regulating economy within the structure of appropriate public policies applied during this period, and on the other hand, of bourgeois-democratic political practices. Nationalism was a regulating fact within this liberal model able to legitimise the public policies underlying competition within the global system. Those policies hinged on local hegemonic coalitions (alliances with middle-class and arstocratic strata) that backed up the dominant power of capitalist monopolies and kept the industrial working class in political isolation. Notable examples were the British and German regulatory systems, based on protection of aristocratic privilege and of Junker landholdings, and the French system, based on support to peasant farming and family-scale

on policy. It took Second World War, which upset the balance of social forces in favour of the working classes and oppressed peoples, for its message to be understood and to become central to the new version of the single thought.

This explains why a new single thought, starting in 1945, took the place of liberal nationalism and prevailed on the world scene until 1980. Indeed, the Second World War, through the defeat of fascism, changed the relationship of forces in favour of the working classes in the developed countries of the West (these classes gained a legitimacy and status that they had never theretofore possessed), of the colonial peoples who freed themselves, and of the countries of really existing socialism' (which I would rather call Sovietism). This new relationship is behind the threefold construction of welfare states based on national Keynesian policies, of development states in the Third World, and of planned state socialism. I would therefore describe the single thought of the 1945–1980 period as 'social and national,' operating within the framework of a controlled globalisation.

Karl Polanyi was the first to understand the nature and bearing of the crystallisation of this new thought, which was to become the single thought of the postwar period. I will not dwell here on his critique of the 1880–1945 liberalism that was responsible for the catastrophe. In a frontal attack on the capitalist uptopia he showed that labour, nature, and money could be treated as commodities only at the cost of the alienation and degradation of human beings, the pitiless destruction of the planet's resources, and the subversion of the government-money relationship to the profit of financial speculators. These three basic features of liberalism's irrationality were to surface again after 1980.

The dominant single thought of the 1945–1980 years was thus built, at least in part, on the critique of liberalism. That is why I described it as 'social and national,' intentionally omitting the word 'liberal' in order to underline this fact. The new single thought, often simplistically called 'Keynesian', remained, of course, a capitalist way of thinking. That is why it did not make a radical' break with the basic dogmas of liberalism, but merely rearranged them incompletely. Labour was still treated as a commodity, but the severity of its treatment was mitigated through the three principles of collective bargaining, social insurance, and wage increases proportional to productivity increases. Contrariwise, natural resources remained the object of systematic and aggravated wastage, which is the inescapable consequence of the absurd 'discounting of the future' characteristic of 'rational' short-run economic calculation (whereas what we need is the exact contrary—to give greater value to the future). Money, on the other hand, was thereafter subject to political control at both governmental and global levels. (The purpose of Bretton Woods was to maintain stable exchange rates.)

The two adjectives 'social' (not socialist) and 'national' express well the essential political objectives operative during this period and, consequently, the methods employed for those purposes. It was held that solidarity—which was expressed in a remarkable stability of income distribution, in full employment, and in continual increases in social expenditures—needed to be maintained on the national level through policies of systematic state intervention (described as 'Keynesian' or, rather, 'neo- Keynesian' policies). Reformulation of these policies in terms of

(Fordist or welfarist) 'regulation' allowed specification of the grounds for the validity and effectiveness of state intervention as thus conceived. Nevertheless, this nationalism, indubitable, never amounted to all-out nationalism. For it was circumscribed within a general climate of regionalisation (as the building of 'Europe' attests) and of an accepted, even desired, but controlled globalisation through such efforts as the Marshall Plan, the expansion of multinational corporations, UNCTAD, GATT, and the organisation of collective North–South discussions within the UN framework.

The basic aims of these welfare state practices were analogous to those of modernisation and industrialisation for the newly independent countries of the Third World, which I call the Bandung project for Asia and Africa with its parallel, *desarrollismo* (developmentalism) in Latin America. We can thus characterise this single thought as dominant on the global scale, excluding only the zone of Sovietism. For the Third World countries, an equally important objective was to overcome their backwardness through effective and controlled entry into a world system undergoing sustained growth.

Thus, the single thought of the 1945–1980 phase was not merely an 'economic theory' (that of Keynesianism and the macroeconomic management flowing from it) but was likewise the expression of a true corporate project which, though capitalist, was also 'social.' And within this framework it must be understood, substantial progress was realised in regard to specific social rights that gave concrete expression to general rights. The right to work and the rights of workers; the rights to education, health, and welfare assistance; the establishment of pension and retirement funds; and the readjustment of pay scales in favour of working women—all these were always presented as the very objectives of economic growth and development. Of course, the actual achievements in these domains were uneven and generally dependent on the strength of progressive social movements.

Four decades after the end of the Second World War this model has used up its potential for expansion. It is this evolution, with its parallel in the exhaustion of the Sovietist countermodel, that lies at the origin of the overall crisis of the system which began in 1980 and accelerated throughout the next decade to end in 1990 with the generalised collapse of the three component subsystems of the prior phase (the welfare state, the Bandung project, and the Sovietist system). It was this crisis, unfolding on the level* of reality, that caused the collapse of the 'social and national' single thought which had been operative in the framework of the 'controlled globalisation' of the postwar phase. This collapse was obviously not the result of debates about 'economic theory' in which 'young' neoliberals (pupils of Von Hayek, Chicago-school monetarists, etc.) were opposed by 'socialist dinosaurs,' as is sometimes suggested by the polemicists who currently hold the stage.

The new period, which opened with the collapse of the prior phase's real-growth models, has itself not yet had enough time to become stabilised. That is why I have analysed it in terms of 'chaos' rather than a new national or global order, and why I have analysed its practices in terms of 'crisis management' and not of a new growth model.

This observation informs the description I have here put forward of the new crisis-impelled single thought. This thought, which is put forward as 'globalised neoliberalism,' can be more precisely characterised as a social neoliberalism, operative within globalisation gone wild. By that very fact, it is impracticable, incapable of any sort of actual or full realisation. Its constituent dogmas (privatisation, free trade, flexible exchange rates, cuts in public spending, deregulation) are too well known to need discussion here. They cannot last because they shut capitalism into a fatal stagnation, shutting all the doors that might let it overcome the slump and begin a new growth period. I have given elsewhere the grounds for this judgement, which I share with Paul Sweezy and Harry Magdoff, namely that the single-minded pursuit of profit maximisation, even were it not to clash with anti-system forces representing the aspirations of workers and oppressed peoples, would inescapably involve a structural disequilibrium in which supply exceeded demand. In other words, contrary to the pseudo-theoretical dogma of capitalist utopia (the theory of pure economics), markets are not self-regulating. To work, they need government regulation.

The hard choices imposed by the new single thought do not stem from some intellectual waywardness that allowed their advocates to win a theoretical debate. They are the product of a new relationship of forces, extremely favourable to capital, since the working classes and the peripheral nations have steadily lost the positions of strength they had held at the moment when fascism was defeated. The development models on which they based themselves having become worn out, the popular forces have not yet had time to regroup around new social projects that would be adequate, possible, and acceptable to them. This imbalance is at the origin of the sway of speculative capital markets, an analysis of which one have put forward elsewhere.

Though these hard choices are generally dominant in rhetorical discourse, the reality is that they are applied in a way that at times flagrantly contradicts the dogmas from which they stem. The vaunted globalisation remains curtailed to the detriment of labour markets and, to an ever-increasing extent, by strengthened restrictions against immigration; rhetoric about the virtue of competition barely hides how in practice monopolies are systematically defended (as is visible in the dealings of the new World Trade Organisation, or WTO); and insistence on discounting the future reduces to zero the significance of environmentalist discourse. Finally, belying their affirmation of internationalist principles, the Great Powers (conspicuously the United States) continually apply raw power in all domains, whether military (the Persian Gulf War) or economic (the 'Super 301' clause in the U.S. foreign trade law).

Of course, the new single thought and the policies following from it are directed at systematically dismanding the specific rights that had been achieved by the workers and lower classes. Given this, all its discourse about democracy is exposed as empty rhetoric, unrelated to reality. In practice, democracy based on an organised citizenry is being replaced by the right-wing anarchist utopia. Reality then lashes back the emergence of communal, ethnic, and fundamentalist religious particularisms, confronting an ineffectual state and a disruptive marketplace.

The current single thought has no future. As a symptom of the crisis, it offers no solutions but is itself part of the problem.

The single thought of capitalist political economy has always been based on an imperialist world view, in accord with the development of capitalism which, by its very nature, has always been uneven and polarising on the world scale. During the monopolistic nationalist liberal phase (from 1880 to 1945), imperialism was (or rather imperialisms were) synonymous with conflict among imperialist powers, in the Leninist sense. In contrast, the social and national postwar phase (1945–1980) was characterised on the one hand by the strategic convergence of national imperialisms under the discipline of a hegemonic United States, and on the other by a retreat of imperialism, which was forced to withdraw from the regions of 'real socialism' (the USSR, Eastern Europe, China) and to bargain with national liberation movements over the terms under which it would maintain its position' in its Asian, African, and Latin American peripheries. Now that 'really existing socialism' and Third World radical populism have met their ruin, imperialism is once again on the offensive. The 'globalisation' thesis proclaimed so arrogantly by the current ideology is nothing but a new way in which the inherently imperialist nature of the system asserts itself. In this sense, it can be said that 'globalisation' is the euphemism for that forbidden word, imperialism.

Of course, the permanently imperialist dimension of capitalist political economy is never admitted. The material advantages associated with imperialism—notably the superprofits enjoyed by dominant capitalists—are always buried under the vaguest possible rhetoric about 'international competition.' Assertions about such age-old competition, which antedates the modern system of global capitalism, can mean everything or nothing. For this competition is governed not by purported natural laws (such as racial inequality) or pseudo-natural laws (such as the uniqueness of cultures or the laws of the market as alleged by economic theory), but by the strategic options of nations and peoples within the logical framework specific to each successive historical system.

Can we hope to see the reconstitution of a coherent and effective anti-capitalist discourse, in confrontation with the capitalist rhetoric whose major features, expressed simultaneously in its singular character and its successive adaptations, I have outlined? I will not here try to answer this question, which goes beyond our topic. I will merely say that anti-capitalist discourse is truly radical only when it deals with the basic and permanent features of capitalism, and in the first instance with the alienated nature of economic behaviour. That, in my[1] opinion, was the meaning of Marx's project.

Yet there have been partially anti-capitalist discourses developed during the real history of the last two centuries, which, despite their limits, have proven effective in some ways. Without them, neither Western social democracy, nor Eastern state socialism, nor the Southern project of national liberation could have existed. These anti-capitalist discourses were able to impose on the dominant sectors of capital those historic compromises which forced it to adapt to the popular and working-class demands expressed in the above-mentioned three instances. The sovietist alternative model stemmed from this sort of unradical critique of capitalism, with

the result that in reality it led to ‘capitalism without capitalists.’ But here also, as always, that evolution was not the result of a special theoretical outlook (not even though it could be considered a ‘deviation’ from the Marxist proposals), but was the result of real challenges confronting the societies at issue and real relationships of social forces marking them. As always, the theory was produced by reality, not the other way around.

Chapter 5
Is Social History Marked by Overdetermination or Underdetermination?

Louis Althusser's concept of overdetermination follows directly from his structuralist concept of social systems.[1] He suggests, at least implicitly if not explicitly, that the determining factors at work alongside each other in various instances of social reality are in fact convergent, because they all contribute simultaneously to the reproduction of the system, to its adaptation to what is required for its evolution, and to the crisis that will eventually propel society beyond it. The economic determinants, and those that govern politics, ideology, and culture, all work in the same direction and consequently 'overdetermine' social evolution. Thus, if a transformation is economically necessary, it also is politically, ideologically, and culturally necessary—and the reciprocal is also the case. If one accepts that the economic factor is, in the last analysis, decisive, the notion of overdetermination can easily lead to an economic determinist reading of history in which the other factors adapt themselves to the requirements of the economic one.

This is certainly a possible interpretation of Marxism, and I would not be so presumptuous as to deny this reading by, for example, calling it 'deviationist' or, even worse, 'heretical.' But it is not my interpretation of Marxism, for at least two reasons.

The first reason is that I do not think it right to pose the question of the relationships among various determining influences as though similar terms apply to all the stages of history. I have often said and repeated that economics as an autonomous factor is specific to capitalism, while in former, tributary, systems it is subordinate to politics. This observation is perhaps not incompatible with the Althusserian theory, and some of his pupils have integrated it into the system of their master by suggesting a distinction between decisiveness in the last analysis and dominance.

I consider this a useful proposition, and I myself have adopted it precisely to formulate the distinguishing difference between tributary systems (in which

[1] This text was first published as Chap. 3, in: *Spectres of Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998). The copyright for this text is owned by the author.

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politics is dominant) and capitalism (in which economics is dominant). All that is certainly quite familiar to those who have read my writings on this subject. I will not dwell on it.

The second reason is, on the contrary, totally incompatible with Althusserian structuralism and, consequently, with his concept of overdetermination. According to my thesis, each of the determining factors is governed by its own logic, whether its status be that of last-analysis determinance (economics) or dominance (political in tributary systems, economic in capitalism, or, as I maintain, cultural in the communist future). These specific logics are autonomous, and complementarity among them does not necessarily ensue, even spontaneously. They frequently clash with each other, and it is a priori impossible to foresee which of them will predominate. In my opinion, Marx perfectly analysed the economic logic of capitalism, and the accumulation of capital, as its dominant trait, that is to say, the channels through which this economic logic is imposed onto political, ideological, and cultural logics. On the other hand, I have said that neither Marx nor the historical forms of Marxism have put forward comparably powerful analyses dealing with the logics of the other determining factors. Moreover I do not believe that non-Marxian theories have made any significant contribution in these regards.

The conflict among determining factors, through which each expresses its own logic, gives to history its own specific range of uncertainty, and this distinguishes it from fields governed by natural law. Neither social nor individual histories are 'programmed'. Freedom is defined precisely by this conflict of logics, which allows choice among different possible alternatives. Therefore, against the concept of overdetermination I advocate that of underdetermination.

Does this mean that societies are incoherent? Not at all; they always are coherent in the sense that the conflict among logics (underdetermination) always finds a solution, one among several possible solutions, through the subordination of some logics to others. Social, political, ideological, and economic struggles mould societies by forcing them to choose one type of coherence rather than another.

In contemporary discussions the autonomy of these different logics has been emphasised by various participants, most notably the autonomy of a unity (itself complex) among political, ideological, and cultural factors. Nevertheless, I do not consider that the various theses put forward on these subjects are really strong enough to carry conviction (at least not with me). They point out problems, but give no answers. This weakness is frequently expressed in sentences like 'Such-and-such analysis or conceptualisation is economic determinist, and disregards political or cultural factors.' Yes, they are disregarded, but how is one to overcome such 'disregard' and demonstrate the complementary (overdetermining) or conflictual (underdetermining) relationship of the logics at issue?

It is easy for me to agree with Jean Baudrillard that value has a symbolic dimension, that the domination of power centres over the system as a whole is related to the fact that those centres are also the producers of the meanings and signs tlLat are indispensable to everyone. But how does this production of meaning operate? What are the symbols at issue, and what is it that makes them what they are? Discourse about these subjects has remained very vague, even though here

and there interesting and pregnant insights have been expressed, as was the case in its time with Freudian Marxism or, today, with the critique of patriarchy.

On the other hand I find it very difficult to accept the idea that strong cultural logics, each very different from one another, have prevailed over what Braudel calls the long run, that is to say, over a span sufficiently long enough to include within it social and economic changes important enough to be considered qualitative transformations. I have criticised this idea, which 1 have termed 'culturalist', and which, in this moment of crisis, has the wind in its sails (on this topic see my critique of postmodernism). I have not rejected this idea on the grounds of its 'anti-Marxism' (a sort of theological reasoning for which I have only contempt) but because I believe that I have shown it to be belied by history. For example, I have recongnised that what people claim as their own diverse 'cultural particularities' (particular to Christian 'occidentals,' or to the Muslim or Confucian worlds) have in reality operated in a very similar way in various tributary societies of the past. They should therefore be considered 'generalities', even though taking on particular forms. I have likewise recognised that capitalism constituted a break in the cultural history of Europe, not a continuity. On these ground I have affirmed—in contradistinction to Serge Latouche's 'Westernisation of the world' thesis—that the predominant culture of our modern epoch is not 'Western' but is really and truly capitalist. By this I mean first of all that this culture—which can be described in terms of Promethean dynamism—was not that of medieval and Christian Europe. It is another matter altogether that Europeans, having broken with their own past, should have wished to deny that past by claiming for themselves mythical ancestors present in both their past and current history (see my explication of this matter in *Eurocentrism).* 1 also mean, when I choose to describe modern culture as capitalist, that the essential features of this culture are easily explained by the basic features of capitalism. Cultural dynamism is not at the origin of the dynamism of capital accumulation (though this is what Max Weber basically maintained). On the contrary, it is the dynamism of capital accumulation (which is effortlessly explained through competitive pressures on every capitalist) that carries in its wake the dynamically changing modern culture.

Also worthy of mention are other attempts, quite outside the scope of Marxist discussions, to analyse social change on the basis of an avowed irreducibility of different structural levels to any economic, or other 'common denominator'. I refer here especially to the theses of those called postmodernists. I will put forward a critique of them in a later chapter, because these propositions seem to me to be typical in all ways of the social thought characteristic of moments of crisis like the present. Out of an almost morbid fear of falling into 'past excesses,' (as shown by their critique of 'broad narratives' and their mistrust of conceptual thought), they calmly accept a complementary function to the ideas needed to legitimise the globalised neoliberal economics prevalent at this moment. Postmodernism, for all these reasons, has remained sterile insofar as it provides no way to account for the specific logics of those non-economic factors.

All that being the case, the charge of economic determinism against the main historical forms of Marxism is valid and well established, whereas the charge that

Marxism is inherently economic determinist is quite dubious. Even though neither Marx nor the Marxists have yet produced specific theories of ideology, politics, and culture comparable to their economic theory—no more than have the non-Marxists—Marx's approach calls out for just that. There is thus a noneconomic-determinist interpretation of Marxism, to which I adhere.

Social classes under capitalism (not in 'all modes of production' as was stated in the Second and Third Internationals' popularisations of Marxism) are not defined solely by their relationship to the production and distribution of surplus value. As I read Marx, capitalism is based on economic alienation, in contrast to earlier forms of society based on other forms of alienation (which may be regarded as metaphysical). Alienation of labour is no less basic than its exploitation in our analysis of social classes in the modern world. To go beyond capitalism, therefore, requires not merely a 'rectified apportionment of value' (which would lead only to an imaginary 'capitalism without capitalists') but rather the liberation of mankind from economic alienation.

I maintain that, although historical forms of Marxism have forgotten it, Marx's critique of 'economic efficiency' represents merely a particular form of rationality rather than being in itself the expression of rationality in general. Here again I refer to what I have written elsewhere, especially in regard to the so-called environmental dimensions of the question of capital accumulation.

Undoubtedly, social classes do not represent the only social realities, not even in the modern world, not even in its advanced centres. But in pointing out the existence of other forms of social solidarity—that of nations or of various communities and social groupings—does one do anything more than point to the existence of logics other than the economic one? Here again, until substantial progress has been made in the analysis of the political, ideological, and cultural logics there will be no progress in the analysis of those social solidarities, whether they complement or conflict with those stemming from the organisation of society into classes.

The discussion ought to be carried beyond the identification of social classes to deal with actual and possible 'class alliances' both in the metropolitan centres and in the peripheral countries of the polarised global system. I will only comment very briefly on these questions, which 1 have taken up in other writings.

First: In the centres, do we have social democracy or social imperialism? Even if they were social imperialist, the social compromises in the metropolitan countries (the welfare state) are not irreversible, as proven by the neoliberal efforts to dismantle them. The workers' revolt against capitalism cannot be reduced to class struggles within the framework of the capitalist mode of production, no matter how important these might be; it is, or can also be the rejection of alienation (1968 shows this) and as such calls for going beyond the framework within which capitalism reproduces itself.

Second: Is the historical goal of bourgeois imperialism merely economic, or does it call for reflection concerning the role of nations in history? Of course I do not believe that to pose such a question is to 'go outside of Marxism'. It is, on the contrary, a response to what was anticipated above, the need to show how politics is linked to economics.

Third: If neoliberalism persists and achieves its goals, will the new globalisation restore the commonality of the 'active' and 'reserve' armies of labour in central and peripheral countries, and by that very fact will it (as Giovanni Arrighi suggests) give a revolutionary role back to the working classes?

Fourth: Was the Sovietist model 'statist' proving thus that a ruling class can establish its existence through politics, or was it an attempt at 'capitalism without capitalists' destined, as reality has now shown, not to be overthrown by a capitalist counter-revolution but to evolve naturally into a 'capitalism with capitalists'?

Fifth: Should the peripheral bourgeoisies, whose essential function is that of intermediary for world capital, still be characterised as bourgeois? Or are they merely comprador political classes?

Chapter 6
Multipolarity in the Twentieth Century

The Old World systems were nearly always multipolar, although up to now multipolarity has never been truly general or equal. Thus, hegemony has always been more an objective pursued by the powerful than an actual reality. When hegemony has existed, it has always been relative and provisional.[1]

The partners in the multipolar world of the nineteenth century (which continued until 1914) were scarcely anything other than the 'powers' of their age. Within the contemporary triad, there are probably some who hanker after those times and their characteristic 'balance of power'. But that is not the multipolarity which most of the people on earth (85 %) would like to see.

The multipolar world ushered in by the Russian Revolution, then partly imposed by the Asian and African liberation movements, was of a quite different nature. The conventional analysis of the period after the Second World War, which speaks of it in terms of 'bipolarity' and 'cold war', does not give due recognition to the advances of the South. My own approach places the multipolarity of the time in the framework of the real clash of civilizations, which, beyond the deforming ideological expressions, concerned the conflict between capitalism and its possible overcoming by socialism. Whether or not they had made a socialist revolution, the striving of the peoples of the periphery to abolish the effects of polarization due to capitalist expansion necessarily inserted itself into an anti-capitalist perspective.

This is why the reading I shall propose here centres on the strong political solidarity that the conflict between capitalism and socialism inspired, which in turn governed the conceptions of multipolarity peculiar to the second half of the twentieth century.

[1] This chapter contains extracts from Samir Amin: *Beyond US hegemony* (London: Zed 2006). The copyright for this text is retained by the author.

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6.1 The Drama of the Great Revolutions

The 'great revolutions' stand out because they projected themselves far into the future, unlike 'ordinary revolutions', which merely respond to the need for change on the immediate agenda.

In the modern era, only three major revolutions may be considered great in this sense—the French, the Russian and the Chinese; while comparable revolutions occurred on a smaller scale in Mexico, Yugoslavia, Vietnam and Cuba. The French Revolution was not only a 'bourgeois revolution' that substituted the capitalist order for the *ancien régime* and bourgeois power for the power of the aristocracy; it was also a people's (especially a peasants') revolution, whose demands challenged the bourgeois order itself. The radical democratic and secular republic, which set itself the ideal of spreading small-scale property to all, did not stem from the mere logic of capital accumulation (based on inequality), but negated that logic and clearly said as much by declaring economic liberalism to be the enemy of democracy. In this sense, the French Revolution already contained the seeds of the socialist revolutions to come, whose 'objective' preconditions evidently did not exist in France at the time (as the fate of Babeuf and his followers showed). The Russian and Chinese revolutions, with which those of Vietnam and Cuba may also be associated, set themselves the goal of communism, although that too was ahead of the objective requirement to solve the immediate problems of the societies in question.

Consequently, all the great revolutions suffered the effects of being ahead of their time and had great difficulty stabilizing themselves; their brief moments of radicalism were succeeded by retreats and reactionary restorations. By contrast, the other revolutions (such as those in England and the United States) heralded a calm and stable deployment of the system, merely registering the requirements of social and political relations already established within the framework of nascent capitalism. In fact, they do not really deserve the name 'revolutions', so striking were their compromises with the forces of the past and their lack of vision for a more distant future.

In spite of their 'defeats', the great revolutions made history—if we consider their long-term impact. By virtue of the avantgarde values defining their project, they enabled creative utopias to seek to win over people's minds and, in the end, to achieve the highest goal of modernity: to make human beings the active subjects of their history. These values contrast with those of the bourgeois order established elsewhere, which, by fostering passive adaptation to the supposedly objective requirements of the deployment of capital, gave full force to the economistic alienation underlying such adaptation.

6.2 The Weight of Imperialism, the Permanent Stage of the Global Expansion of Capitalism

Since its inception, and at every stage in its history, the global deployment of capitalism has always been polarizing. Yet this characteristic of actually existing capitalism has always been underestimated, to say the least, because of the

Eurocentrism dominating modern thought, even in the avant-garde ideological formations peculiar to the great revolutions. The historical Marxism of the successive Internationals only partly escaped this general rule.

To understand the immensity of this imperialist reality, and to draw all the strategic consequences for the changing of the world, is the first indispensable task that all social and political forces on the receiving end of it have to face, in both the core and the periphery. For what imperialism has brought about is not so much a maturing of conditions for 'socialist revolutions' (or accelerated tendencies in that direction) in the centres of the world system, as challenges to its order through revolts in the periphery. It is no accident that Russia was the 'weak link' in the system in 1917 or that revolution in the name of socialism then shifted eastward to China and elsewhere, whereas the collapse in the West on which Lenin pinned his hopes failed to materialize. The countries that underwent revolution therefore faced the dual, contradictory task of 'catching up' (with methods similar to those of capitalism) and 'doing something else' ('building socialism'). This combination turned out as it did in the various countries; it might perhaps have been better, in the sense of allowing communist aspirations to grow stronger as advances were made in catching up. In any event, this real contradiction crucially shaped the objective conditions under which the post-revolutionary societies evolved.

The forms of political action and organization developed by 'revolutionary parties' (in this case, the Communists of the Third International) remained trapped in the idea that the revolution was 'imminent', that the 'objective conditions' for it were present. The Party therefore had to make up for what was lacking: it had to become an organization to 'make the revolution', and therefore, under the circumstances, to stress homogeneity (later 'monolithism') and an almost military discipline. The parties in question maintained these forms of organization, even when the perspective of an immediate revolutionary assault was abandoned in the late 1920s. They were the placed in the service of a quite different objective: protection of the Soviet state, both internally and externally.

In the peripheries of globalized capitalism—by definition, the 'storm zone' in the imperialist system—a form of revolution did remain on the agenda. But its objective was still essentially blurred and ambiguous. Was it national liberation from imperialism (and preservation of much, or even most, of the social relations characteristic of capitalist modernity), or was it something more? Both in the radical revolutions of China, Vietnam and Cuba, and in the less radical ones in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the question was still: 'to catch up' or 'to do something else'? This challenge was in turn linked to another priority task: defence of the encircled Soviet Union.

6.3 Defence of the Post-revolutionary States Central to the Vanguard's Strategic Choices

The Soviet Union, and later China, found themselves confronted with a dominant capitalism and Western powers systematically seeking to isolate them. Let us just recall that, for a third of the short history of the United States, the strategy of this

hegemonic power of the capitalist system has focused on the goal of destroying its two enemies, whether truly socialist or not; and that Washington has managed to draw into this strategy its subaltern allies in the other centres of the triad (Europe and Japan) and the countries of the periphery, gradually substituting the rule of comprador classes for that of classes with roots in the people's liberation movement.

It is easy to understand that, since revolution was not on the immediate agenda elsewhere, the priority was usually given to defence of the post-revolutionary states. This became the central issue shaping political strategy—in the Soviet Union under Lenin and then Stalin and his successors, in Maoist and post-Maoist China, in the national-populist regimes of Asia and Africa, and among the Communist vanguards (whether lined up behind Moscow or Beijing or neither).

The Soviet Union and China experienced the vicissitudes of a great revolution at the same time that they faced the consequences of the uneven expansion of world capitalism. Both post-revolutionary regimes gradually sacrificed their original objectives to the immediate requirements of 'catching up'—a slide which, by substituting state management for Marx's communist goal of social ownership and by using brutal (sometimes bloody) dictatorial methods to stifle popular democracy, paved the way for the later rush towards capitalist restoration that is common to the two countries (despite the different roads they have travelled). The instruments deployed internally for 'defence of the post-revolutionary state' went hand in hand with external strategies that prioritized the same goal. Communist parties were asked to line up behind these choices, not only in their general strategic direction but even in their day-to-day tactical adjustments. This could not fail to produce a rapid weakening of their capacity for critical thought, as abstract talk of revolution (still supposedly 'imminent') and the maintenance of quasi-military forms of organization come hell or high water detached them from analysis of the real contradictions of society.

The vanguards that refused such a crippling alignment, in some cases daring to look the post-revolutionary societies in the face, did not give up the original Leninist hypothesis of the imminence of revolution, even though it had been ever more visibly refuted in reality. This was the case with Trotskyism and the parties of the Fourth International. It was also true of many activist revolutionary organizations: from the Philippines to India (Naxalites inspired by Maoism), and from the Arab world (Arab nationalists and their followers in South Yemen) to Latin America (Guevarism).

6.4 Nation-Building and/or Socialist Construction in the Radical Countries of the Periphery

The great national liberation movements of Asia and Africa that came into open conflict with the imperialist order, like those that led revolutions in the name of socialism, had to face the conflicting demands of 'catching up' ('nation-building') and transforming social relations in favour of the popular classes. With regard to the second of these tasks, the 'post-revolutionary' (or simply post-independence) regimes of Asia and Africa were certainly less radical than the Communist regimes—which is why

I call them 'national-populist'. Sometimes they drew inspiration from organizational forms (single party, undemocratic rule, a state-run economy) that had been developed in the experiences of 'actually existing socialism', but they generally watered them down through vague ideological choices and compromises with the past.

These were the conditions under which the regimes in place, as well as the critical vanguards (historical Communism), were asked to support the Soviet Union (or, more rarely, China) and invited to enjoy its support. The constitution of this common front against the imperialist aggression of the United States and its European and Japanese partners was certainly beneficial to the peoples of Asia and Africa; it created a degree of autonomy both for the initiatives of their ruling classes and for the activity of popular classes. The proof of this is what happened subsequently, after the Soviet collapse. Even before it, those ruling classes which opted for 'the West' on the illusory grounds that this would be favourable to them obtained nothing in the end. (In Sadat's Egypt, the main case in point, the calculation was that a friendly United States, holding nearly all the cards on the Palestinian issue, could turn the situation round in favour of the Arab and Palestinian cause!) Indeed, their capitulation encouraged the deployment of the strategic offensives of imperialism and, in the case of Israel, strengthened the Washington–Tel Aviv axis.

This is not to say that Moscow did not impose dubious conditions on political forces that were ranged alongside the popular classes in countries allied to it—and, in particular, on the local Communist parties. One might have thought that, within the anti-imperialist front, these parties would preserve all their autonomy of movement—a recognition of the conflicting interests and social projects among the partners involved in the front. For the ruling classes were ultimately pursuing a capitalist (though also 'national') project, whereas the satisfaction of popular class interests required going beyond a perspective whose narrow limits had already been demonstrated in history. But the fact is that the Soviet state fed the illusions that the national capitalist project carried within it, and thereby undermined the autonomous expression of the popular classes. The invention of a theory of the 'non-capitalist road' expressed this choice.

There can be no doubt that during the Bandung era (1955–1980) it was difficult to draw a distinction between the interests of governments and the interests of their peoples. The regimes had only recently emerged out of huge national liberation movements (which had routed imperialism in its old 'colonial' or 'semi-colonial' forms), or sometimes out of genuine revolutions associated with those movements, as in China, Vietnam and Cuba. They were still 'close' to their peoples, and enjoyed great legitimacy.

The example of Arab Communism sheds some light on the tragic consequences of this rallying to the idea of a 'non-capitalist road'. A large majority of Arab Communists accepted the Soviet proposals and became, at best, the 'left wing' of the anti-imperialist national-populist regimes, giving them scarcely critical, virtually unconditional support. Two examples of this were the self-dissolution of the Egyptian Communist Party in 1960 in the deluded hope what it would be allowed to breathe new life into the Nasserite Socialist Party; and the rallying of Khaled Bagdash in Syria to the thesis that only nation-building (not even spelled out as non-capitalist) was the order of the day. I have expressed my views on this

elsewhere, most notably at the time when many of the activists of the period were publishing their memoirs in Egypt. I concluded that Arab Communism as a whole had not essentially left the framework of the 'national-populist' project, and had failed to see that in the end this fitted into a strictly capitalist perspective. This was not an 'opportunist' conjunctural orientation on its part, but a structural choice that expressed the original deficiencies of the Communist parties in question, the ambiguity of the ideologies they promoted, and ultimately their ignorance of the popular classes whose immediate and long-term interests they were supposed to be defending. The result of this unfortunate option was a loss of Communist credibility once the national-populist regimes reached their historical limits and suffered an erosion of legitimacy. Since the Communist left had not presented itself as an alternative beyond national populism, a vacuum was created on the political stage that opened the way for the disastrous rise of political Islam.

It is true that small numbers of Arab Communists rejected this unconditional rallying to the policies of the Soviet state; the examples of the Qawmiyin and their emulators in South Yemen, or a few other 'Maoist' nuclei, bear testimony to this. But they did not depart from the original Leninist thesis that revolution was 'imminent', which they shared with the Guevarist movements of Latin America and the Naxalites in India. The defeat of the courageous movements they inspired shows with hindsight that Lenin's thesis was wrong and based on tragic simplifications.

The no less tragic history of the South African Communist Party forms part of a similar downward slide. In the 1920s the SACP enjoyed the support of a majority of the African popular classes, while the ANC comprised only a minority of the petty bourgeoisie. Yet, on Moscow's advice, the Party wound itself up and offered the leadership of the national movement to the ANC on a platter, with the consequences we know.

In contrast, the Indian Communists, under the influence of Maoism, mostly kept a critical distance from Congress and rejected the thesis of a 'non-capitalist road'. As we have seen in the ch. on India, this is doubtless why they have survived the disaster and are in a better position than others to face the new challenges.

A further contrast is the sizeable fraction of the Latin American left which, under Cuban influence, detached itself from official Communism. The polemics that took place on this occasion—under the banner of the first version of *dependencia* theory—served useful functions and explain, at least in part, why the attachment to democracy has more solid roots there.

6.5 Opening Debate on the Long Transition to World Socialism

While recognizing Lenin's mistaken view of the real challenges, and his misjudgement of the ripeness for revolution, we need to go beyond criticism and self-criticism of the history of twentieth-century Communism, by openly and inventively fostering debate on the positive alternative strategies for the twenty-first century.

Here I can do no more than briefly summarize the points I have made elsewhere.

- Strategies must be devised in response to the challenges of the long transition from world capitalism to world socialism.
- In the course of this long transition, social, economic and political systems produced by the struggles of the reproductive elements of capitalist society will combine, in contradictory fashion, with elements tending to initiate and develop socialist social relations. Two conflicting logics will therefore be present, in permanent combination and permanent contradiction with each other.
- Progress in this direction is necessary and possible in all regions of the world capitalist system, both the imperialist centres and the compradorized peripheries. Of course, by force of circumstance, there will have to be concrete and specific intermediate stages, especially with regard to the contrasts between centres and peripheries.
- Social, ideological and political forces expressing, however confusedly, the interests of popular classes are already working in the directions indicated. The so-called 'alter-globalization' movements are material proof of this. But these movements serve as vehicles for different alternatives, some progressive (in the above sense), some deluded or even clearly reactionary (para-fascist responses to the challenges). To politicize the debate—in the true and proper sense of the term—is the sine qua non for building what I call 'convergence in diversity' of the progressive forces.
- The victims of the deployment of neoliberal capitalism are the majority in all parts of the world, and socialism must be capable of mobilizing the new historical opportunity this creates. But it will be able to do this only if it can take account of the changes resulting from the technological revolutions, which have completely altered the social architecture once and for all. Communism must no longer be the banner only of the 'industrial working class', in the old sense of the term; it can become the banner representing the future of the broad majority of working people, despite the diversity of their situations. To rebuild the unity of working people—both those who benefit from a certain stabilization of the system and those who are excluded from it—is today a major challenge for the inventive thinking that is needed for communist renewal. In the peripheries, this also means organizing huge movements to establish an equal right of access to the land for the whole peasantry. Renewal is all the more necessary because it has often been forgotten that the peasantry is still a half of humanity, and that capitalism in all its forms is incapable of solving this major problem.
- An effective strategy for action within this perspective must be capable of producing simultaneous advances in three directions: social progress, democratization and the construction of a pluricentric world system. The political democracy usually proposed as an accompaniment to the economic options of liberal capitalism is destined to strip democracy of all credibility, in quite dramatic ways. At the same time, social progress from the top down is no longer acceptable as a substitute for inventive formulas involving the democratic power of popular classes. There will be no socialism without democracy, but also no

democratic advances without social progress. Lastly, in view of the persistence of national diversity and the political cultures shaping it, as well as the inequality historically produced by the deployment of world capitalism, it is clear that a margin of opportunity for the necessary social and democratic advances will require the construction of a pluricentric world system. And the first condition for this, of course, is to defeat Washington's project for military control of the planet.

Part III
The Contemporary Challenge

Samir Amin. *Source* This photo is available at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/psi_isp_ iska/5078697012/in/photostream/>

Chapter 7
The Center Will Not Hold: The Rise and Decline of Liberalism

Immanuel Wallerstein, The Modern World System IV: Centrist Liberalism Triumphant, 1789–1914 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 396 pages, $26.95, paperback.[1]

Wallerstein's analysis in the fourth volume of his series on the modern world system is perfectly consistent with the title. The author has produced a remarkable analysis of the birth and subsequent triumph of the 'liberal center' in nineteenth century Europe. I do not intend to summarize this creative work whose theses are supported by strong arguments. Read it and, whatever your opinion may be, you will learn much from it. I shall take up the four major points of this contribution to understanding our world, which are: (1) the centrality of the French Revolution; (2) the long ideological and political conflict through which the crystallization of the liberal center emerges; (3) the parallel that Wallerstein makes between France and England, the major creators of this crystallization; (4) the birth of social science, which is one of its principal products. In this way, I propose to continue the ongoing discussion that has linked Wallerstein, our now deceased colleagues, Frank and Arrighi, and me for four decades.

7.1 The Centrality of the French Revolution

I fully share the assertion on the centrality of the French Revolution, in company with Marx and Hobsbawm (and quite a few others!), which today has become a minority current in historical thinking, contested by the contemporary postmodernist current that is devoted to devaluing the significance of the French Revolution, mainly to the advantage of the American and English Revolutions. However, the French Revolution triggers the political trajectory of modern times far more than the others.

The primary question, in my view, is the articulation between, on the one hand, the class struggles (in the broad sense of the term, i.e., perceived in all dimensions

[1] Samir Amin's books include *The Liberal Virus, The World We Wish to See* and most recently *The Law of Worldwide Value* (all on Monthly Review Press). This article was translated by James Membrez. This text was first published, in: *Monthly Review*, 63, 8 (Janaury 2012). The copyright for this text is owned by the author.

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of their political and ideological expressions) and, on the other hand, the conflict between 'nations' (or states), in this case France and England, in the shaping of *global* history—understood as broadly coinciding with the development of the capitalist world economy. To simplify, the first dimension, the class struggle, could be described as an internal (to each of the two nations) factor, and the second dimension, the inter-state relation, could be described as an external factor. Wallerstein considers the second dimension to be determinant. The French Revolution, he says, is not a French event, but the product of the unfolding conflict between France and England for hegemony in the capitalist world economy. While he bends the stick too far in this direction, in my opinion, Wallerstein does have the merit, consequently, of giving full credit to the French Revolution for its role in building the modern world system.

I shall return later to the central articulation between class struggles and the making of globalized capitalism that, I believe, governs the evolution of the radical critique of capitalism, as much in the long-nineteenth century (the actual subject of this volume) as in the twentieth and undoubtedly the twenty-first century (on which Wallerstein expects to focus in his forthcoming volume).

The French Revolution substitutes the sovereignty of the people for that of the monarch, the very birth of modern politics and of democracy, which becomes consubstantial with it. Certainly, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States had already made the declaration of principle ("We, *the people*"). Yet, the conclusions were not drawn from this principle. Quite the contrary, the efforts of the Founding Fathers were focused on the objective of neutralizing the impact of this declaration. The events that the French Revolution went through (its Jacobin radicalization followed by its reversal), on the other hand, are ordered around these central issues: how to understand and define the sovereignty of the people and how to institutionalize its implementation. The English Revolution of 1687 was even more clearly unconcerned with responding to these issues, which it did not even consider, being content with limiting the powers of the sovereign through the concrete assertion of the powers of the rising bourgeoisie, without thereby repudiating those of the aristocracy.

Hence, I make a distinction between 'great revolutions', which project themselves far into the future, and 'ordinary revolutions', which are content to adjust the organization of power to the immediate requirements of evolving social relations. The French Revolution belongs to the first group, just like the later Russian and Chinese revolutions.

7.2 The Emergence of the Liberal Center

The French Revolution immediately encounters conservative/reactionary social forces. I have defined such forces as those which refuse modernity, the latter being understood as founded on the proclamation that 'man' (today, the human being) makes his own history, while reactionaries reserve the right of initiative to God

(and His Church) and to ancestors (in particular, aristocrats). Consequently, in the Revolution, the moderate democrats (for whom democracy is inseparable from the defense of property) and the radicals (who discover the conflict between the values of liberty and equality) begin to clash. The objective conditions of the era do not allow them to get beyond certain limitations and confusions. The radicals, who are moving towards socialism, will only achieve autonomy from the Jacobin tradition of the radical revolution beginning in 1848. The struggles occur around the distinction made by Sieyes (and emphasized by Wallerstein) between active citizen and passive citizen, the surpassing of representative electoral democracy, initially based on restricted voting rights and later on universal suffrage, and the method of managing the economy (governed by private property and competition).

I have proposed a representation of this conflict in which I emphasize the philosophical debate initiated by the Enlightenment concerning 'rationality'. The crystallization of the bourgeois social project disconnects the management of politics (confided to an electoral democracy based on restricted voting rights followed by the advent of universal suffrage) from the management of the economy (controlled by private property and competition). These two dimensions of reality are then reconnected by the artificial—and false—assertion of the 'natural' convergence of rationalities: the rationality of political choices and that of the market.

The social struggles of the disadvantaged against the power of the exclusive beneficiaries of the new liberalism (a power which is linked to a conservatism that is gradually moderating, in that it accepts evolution and modernity) compel advances that are both political (universal suffrage) and social (freedom of workers to organize, denied at the beginning in the name of liberalism). Nevertheless, the European socialism that crystallizes in this context will be, in turn, gradually integrated with capitalist modernity through the evolution of liberalism, which consequently becomes 'centrist' and capable of adopting social postures. The conservatism of the state itself—the Bonapartism of the Third Empire and Bismarck in Germany—is used to speed up the evolution of the liberals themselves. In my opinion, it remains the case that this evolution, which crowns the success of centrist liberalism at the end of the nineteenth century, cannot be separated from the imperialist position of the centers in the world system of capitalism/imperialism.

Wallerstein offers important analyses on these questions that, in my opinion, skillfully complement the writings of Marx and Hobsbawm, among others. I will not go into that here. The centrist liberalism that is triumphant in Europe and the United States, then, develops in all dimensions of reality: (1) it is the ultimate expression of the ideology that is still dominant today ('the liberal virus'); (2) it formulates the method of managing the political practice of representative electoral democracy (in which suffrage ultimately becomes universal), the definition of the sharing of powers and the rights of the citizen; (3) it combines this formulation with economic management based on respect for property; (4) it provides legitimacy for new fundamental social inequalities (wage workers versus capitalists and property owners); (5) it combines this group of rights and duties with the assertion of 'the national interest' in relations with other nations of central capitalism; (6) it

combines all of these practices implemented in the centrist liberal nation with the practices of domination exercised over the 'others' (the imperialist dimension of the project).

7.3 The France/England Parallel

Here again, showing great originality, Wallerstein moves away from the still-dominant discourse that contrasts the evolutions of France and England in the nineteenth century. In counterpoint, he proposes, with convincing arguments, a parallel reading of the evolutions in the two major countries of centrist liberal modernity.

I certainly share Wallerstein's viewpoint that the comparative advantage of England results not so much from its advance in the industrial revolution, but more from its control of a gigantic colonial empire, founded on the conquest of India, in particular. The English reality, more than that of any other country in the new center of the world system, is inseparable from this Empire. The British Empire is the model sub-system of the new capitalist/imperialist system. South African communists who, in the 1920s, had focused their analyses on the challenges of this reality, as well as the writings of Amiya Bagchi, Giovanni Arrighi, and several others, have contributed to bringing out this essential consideration.

For all that, however, should the specificity of the industrial revolution be reduced to nothing by limiting it to a bunch of technological innovations similar to those that had taken place in other times and places? I do not think so. The new 'machino-facture' should be contrasted with the 'manufactures' of earlier times. It begins the massive deskilling of labor that, as it grows worse, leads right to the Taylorism of "modern times" described by Harry Braverman (and Charlie Chaplin!). The new industrial revolution is structured, in turn, around a particular type of agricultural development based on the rapid expropriation of the rural majority. The development of this model of capitalism would have been unsustainable without the safety valve of massive emigration to the Americas. The 'European' capitalist model (which could not be exported) was certainly not the only historical path for possible advances. China's 'industrious revolution', rediscovered by the recent works of Kenneth Pomeranz and Giovanni Arrighi, based on maintaining access to the land for the majority of the peasants, demonstrates that other paths to progress were at work, which dominant Euro-centrist thinking can hardly imagine.

Be that as it may, the triumph of the European model has completely transformed history and, consequently, given rise to a series of simplifications to which Wallerstein calls our attention. The English economy was still widely based on agriculture in the middle of the nineteenth century and the French industrial system was not behind that of its English competitor, Wallerstein reminds us.

Yet, while the similarity of the changes in England and France appear to be obvious in areas concerning the economic progress of capitalist development, the same cannot be said about the political struggles that accompanied these

developments. The English path is characterized by the successive compromises between the bourgeoisie, thus described as *middle class*, and the aristocracy of the *Ancien Regime*—in that way softening the effects of the entrance of the working classes onto the political scene. In the French Revolution, the confrontation between the latter and governments established for the benefit of the bourgeoisie is infinitely more visible. The 'Irish' factor, the result of a particular type of internal colonialism unique to England, contributed, in turn, to delaying the maturation of a radical socialist consciousness in England. It is not by chance that the most advanced moment in the expression of this radi- calization is the Paris Commune, difficult to imagine in England.

In the United States, the radical popular component has failed, up to now, to distinguish itself from liberal democracy. In my opinion, the reason is the devastating effects of the successive waves of immigration, in which the construction of ethnic communities (*communautarismes*), themselves arranged into a hierarchy, is substituted for the maturation of a socialist consciousness.

Yet, despite the differences on which I have focused my attention here, the final result is identical: the same liberal center and the same historical compromise between capital and labor that determines the existence of that liberal center triumphed, above all else, as the form of managing modern society at the end of the nineteenth century, not only in England, France and the United States, but even elsewhere in Europe, although in attenuated forms. The major reason for this convergence is quite simply the dominant (imperialist) position that Europe and the United States occupy in the world system, the construction of which is perfected in the nineteenth century. Cecil Rhodes had perfectly understood, undoubtedly better than many European socialists, that the choice was 'imperialism or revolution'. The impact of the class struggles in each of the social formations of the system and the impact of the conflicts between the states over their position in the global hierarchy are inseparable.

7.4 The Formation of the Social Sciences

The picture drawn by Wallerstein of the birth of the social sciences in the nineteenth century is a convincing demonstration of the inescapable relation between the crystallization of the definitions of the new objects that constitute each of these sciences, on the one hand, and the development of liberal capitalism in the nineteenth century, on the other.

The birth of social thought that proposes to meet criteria of scientific objectivity could only be, in its very definition, the product of modernity, founded on the recognition that people make their history. In earlier times, the most advanced thinking possible gave itself the sole objective of reconciling faith and reason, while the modern scientific project relinquishes this metaphysical concern of searching for the absolute to theologians in order to concentrate solely on the discovery of relative and limited truths. However, the elements of rational social

thought freed from religious dogma emerge before modern times, particularly in China and in the Muslim world (Ibn Khaldoun). Modernity, far from being formed 'miraculously' and belatedly in the London-Paris-Amsterdam triangle of the sixteenth century, had begun its birth five centuries earlier in China and subsequently in the Muslim Caliphate. It remains true, however, that it is only in the nineteenth century, as Wallerstein demonstrates, that Enlightenment thought succeeds in forcing philosophical reason to break apart into distinct disciplines.

Political economy occupies a dominant place within the group of new social sciences, thereby reflecting the reversal of dominance in the hierarchy of instances (in the mode of production—tr.), which moves from the political in earlier tributary modes of production to the economic in capitalism. My insistence on the dimension of modern commodity alienation complements, in my opinion, Wallerstein's contribution in the chapter here in question. It allows us to read the history of the formation of modern social scientific thought as a development that leads to Marx. Subsequently, the exclusive concern of the new 'economics' (Wallerstein reminds us that the term *economics* is introduced for the first time by Alfred Marshall in 1881) will be to substitute for Marx's historical materialist method a definition of the 'economic' that transforms it into an ahistori- cal anthropology. The new science is used in an attempt to demonstrate that in the imaginary 'market economy', invented as a response to Marx, the markets are self-regulating, tend to the production of equilibrium (that is optimal, moreover), and hence merit consideration as the expression of a trans-historical rationality. Walras in the nineteenth century and Sraffa in the twentieth, the major thinkers who set themselves the objective of demonstrating this, failed in this impossible endeavor.

The world economy (of historical capitalism) moves from disequilibrium to disequilibrium through changes in the balance of power between classes and nations, without ever tending to any equilibrium definable in advance. 'Economics', however, which still forms the major axis of social thought under capitalism, fulfills a decisive ideological function without which the power of the established liberal center would lose its pretense of rationality, i.e., its legitimacy.

7.5 The Nineteenth Century, Apogee of Historical Capitalism

Capitalism is not a system based on a transhistorical rationality that would allow it to be reproduced indefinitely and thereby become the manifestation of the 'end of history'. As opposed to this ideological view inspired by the 'economics' of imaginary capitalism, I read the historical trajectory of capitalism as consisting of a long preparation (eight centuries from the year 1000 in China to 1800 in Europe), a short apogee (the nineteenth century) and a decline begun in the twentieth century.

Are the two concepts 'European world economy' and 'historical capitalism' interchangeable? My definition of historical capitalism includes its global tendency. It advances by including external regions, beginning in 1492 and ending

only at the close of the nineteenth century. The analyses of each of the four teammates (Wallerstein, Arrighi, Frank, originally, and later me) converge on this essential point and break with the dominant conventional view that, to say the very least, underestimates the globalized dimension of capitalism,—which it is content to juxtapose to the analysis of the diverse formations that make up the world system.

My approach to the formation of capitalism begins with the specificity of this mode of production in contrast with the preceding dominant mode, which I have described as tributary. The latter does not require the formation of a political authority covering a vast area. That remains the exception, exemplified by China in contrast with the successive failures to establish empires in the Middle Eastern/Mediterranean/European region.

Wallerstein chooses to identify the birth of the European world economy as occurring either in 1492 or a century and a half earlier in Europe. I am proposing a more ambitious approach here, based on the thesis that the same contradictions traversed all of the tributary societies, in Asia as well as in Europe. From this perspective, I see the beginning of capitalist modernity occurring much earlier in the Sung era in China, spreading to the Abbassid Caliphate and then the Italian cities. Nevertheless, Wallerstein and I jointly critique Frank's later thesis (formulated in *Re-Orient*), which eliminates capitalist specificity.

Wallerstein draws a picture of the nineteenth century as the (short) apogee of capitalism: the social order is stabilized and the working classes have ceased being dangerous, and Europe's domination over 'the rest of the world' is established and appears indestructible. These phenomena are really two sides of the same coin. However, this apogee will be brief.

In Europe, the apogee of capitalism leads to the formation of new 'nations' inspired, to varying degrees, by the models of France, England, the Netherlands, and Belgium. This type of 'national renaissance', which takes the place of a bourgeois revolution, shapes the unifications of Germany and Italy, begun in 1848 and completed in 1870. The formation of eastern and southeastern European nations, also proclaimed in 1848, completes the picture. These complex processes, which combine the aspirations of the educated middle classes, instead of the established bourgeoisies, and the peasantry, were the subject of animated debates, notably within Austro-Marxism and nascent Bolshevism at the end of the nineteenth century. These movements, the so-called 'springtime of nations' (of peoples?), are obviously distinct from those of peoples who are victims of internal colonialism, a specific phenomenon unique to England (the Irish question) and the United States (the Afro-American question). Similar movements of the awakening of peoples who are victims of internal colonialism develop in the Indian regions of Latin America, (the Mexican Revolution of 1910–1920 is the prime example of this awakening) and in South Africa.

The very success of the expansion of this apogee, however, is going to lead rapidly to the first great systemic crisis of capitalism. The challenge presented by this large and long crisis, which begins in 1873 and will find only a—provisional—solution after the Second World War, will bring about a three-part response from capital: the move to

monopoly capitalism, financialization, and globalization. This qualitative transformation of historical capitalism marks the end of the system's apogee and begins the long decline through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century.

Will this long decline, from the first lengthy crisis (1873–1945/1955) to the second (begun in 1971 and still deepening)—the 'autumn of capitalism'—coincide with the 'springtime of peoples'? This challenge is central to the social struggles and international conflicts (the revolt of the peripheries) taking place for the last 100 years.

It is clear that the nineteenth century still inspires a barely concealed nostalgia among all defenders of the so-called 'liberal' (centrist liberal) capitalist order.

7.6 The Impossible Stabilization of the Liberal Center in the Peripheries of the Capitalist/Imperialist World System

The triumph of the liberal center involved only Europe and the United States and, perhaps, but much later, Japan. In the peripheries of the system, the capitalist order could never be stabilized on the basis of any consensus able to carry the conviction of its legitimacy. From the beginning, i.e., from the middle of the nineteenth century, the states, nations, and peoples of the peripheries began their struggles against this system. I will be content here to point to three of the great movements that, beginning in the nineteenth century, herald the twentieth century and the decline of the capitalist imperialist world system.

China had been integrated into this system only from the opium wars (1840s). Yet barely a decade later—from 1850 to 1865—its people were involved in the Taiping Revolution (which is not a "revolt" as the dominant historiography continues to describe it), a surprisingly modern attempt to deal with the new challenge. Consequently, it is not equivalent to one of the millenarian movements of earlier tributary eras. The Taiping Revolution combines a radical critique of the Chinese imperial-tributary system with a critique of the new imperialist order that has just begun to be organized. It paves the way for Maoism in the twentieth century.

In Russia—a semi-periphery, it could be said—the debate between Slavophiles and Occidentalists poses, in similar, even if rather confused, terms, the same question: how to reject the new world order? Should this rejection take the form of a return to the past or the adoption of Western values? The conflict is transformed into another debate concerning the means of rejecting both the past and the new order, in which the Narodniks are opposed to those who will give rise to Bolshevism.

In the Arab world, the *Nahda*, on the other hand, offers a completely different perception of the new imperialist challenge and puts forward a backward-looking response calling for the reestablishment of Islam in its original greatness. The *Nahda*, which initiates the twentieth century Arab revolutions, traps the peoples concerned in an impasse.

One could examine the diversity of examples and analyze them more closely. This is an indispensable task for understanding how the decline of capitalism

('the autumn of capitalism') could become, or not become, synonymous with the 'springtime of peoples' and what conditions could begin a movement 'beyond capitalism' and the world system within which it develops.

The triumph of the liberal center itself has turned out to be more fragile than it seemed to be in the eyes of Europe and the United States. The liberal center had, moreover, only advanced slowly in the major centers, even more slowly in most parts of Europe. It had been challenged by the Paris Commune (1871) which demonstrated in theory and in practice that another social order was necessary and possible: socialism, or communism, understood as a higher stage in the development of human civilization. However, it will be argued that since the Commune was defeated, the order of the liberal center seems to have gained a decisive legitimacy. The reality, which will unfold through the convulsions of the twentieth century, is more nuanced. The clash of anti-liberal reaction (fascism) and projects more radical than those of the liberal center (popular fronts) will occupy the foreground in the interwar period. Yet, it will be argued again, this is now past; the order of the liberal center finally seems to enjoy a solid consensus in Europe and the United States. Certainly, but this observation is not sufficient. The deepening of the systemic crisis ('the crisis of civilization') that goes along with the move from monopoly capitalism (1880–1960) to the generalized monopoly capitalism in place today entails, in turn, the decline of the order of the liberal center, a deviation from the democratic perspective and practice on which its legitimacy rested.

The triumph of the liberal center, once again exclusively in Europe and the United States, could only be imperfect, unstable, vulnerable, and incapable of responding to the challenge that I define as the confrontation between the heretofore conservative forces, which defend the preservation of the established imperialist order, and the ambitions of the peoples of the peripheries, openly anti-imperialist and potentially anti-capitalist.

The twentieth century sees the start of an initial wave of advances by the liberation movements of the peripheries: 1905 in Russia (which prepares the way for 1917), 1911 in China (which prepares the way for 1949), 1910–1920 in Mexico, and other events of the same kind. Europeans, who had benefitted from having exclusive control over the initiative of constructing the modern world since 1492, give way to the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This reversal is the major event in my interpretation of the decline of historical capitalism. I analyze it as the concrete historical demonstration of the central propositions of Maoism: (1) that the peripheries are the 'zone des tempetes' where the capitalist/imperialist order (these two dimensions of the reality are inseparable) enjoy no stable legitimacy; (2) that the challenge to this order takes place simultaneously on the plurality of levels in which social reality appears—states (ruling classes), nations and peoples (working classes)—and that, consequently, class struggles and international conflicts are intertwined in complex and changing relations of complementarity and conflict; (3) that the movement carries in itself the potential capacity to go beyond national liberation and development in and by capitalism in the direction of challenging the social order of capitalism.

I thus interpret the nineteenth century as the brief moment of apogee in the long history of capitalism. Since the path to capitalism was paved over a long

gestational period lasting hundreds of years in successive waves, I view the decline of capitalism as linked to successive waves of possible advances in the direction of a future socialism. It is precisely here that the focus of my question is located: will the autumn of capitalism and the springtime of peoples coincide?

7.7 There is no Possible Clear-cut Answer to this Question

The coincidence is difficult to achieve. It implies the construction of convergences at the level of the entire world ('North' and 'South'), i.e., an internationalism of peoples capable of defeating the internationalism of generalized monopoly capitalism. Once again, the class struggles cannot be viewed as realities specific to the social formations that form the world system or as conflicts between the ruling classes acting on the world stage. As Marx already said, the working class (its definition is not important, be it restrictive or expanded) only exists in its conscious conflict with the bourgeois class that exploits it. Without that, the workers remain pawns controlled by the competition that pits them against one another. In the same way, the 'national' working classes exist only through their participation in the struggle against dominant capital on the world scale. Without that, they remain hostages manipulated by their national ruling classes involved in competition with each other.

Dominant conventional thought is economistic, linear, and determinist. There is no alternative to submission to the demands of the market. Moreover, as that way of thinking repeats incessantly, ultimately it is the market that produces progress. In opposition to that, Marx analyzes the contradictions of an aging system in dialectical terms that open the way to different futures that are equally possible. The victims of a system that has become obsolete can act consciously to surpass it. That is the 'radical path', whether it is described as a 'revolution' or revolutionary advances through radical reforms in stages. Or the system can collapse solely through its own internal contradictions. That is the path of 'selfdestruction' whose possibility Marx does not ignore.

Faced with the challenge of an obsolete capitalism of generalized monopolies, in which the pursuit of accumulation is henceforth simply destructive of the human being and nature with ever-increasing power, the societies of the triad of collective imperialism (United States, Europe, and Japan) are currently embarked on the path of self-destruction. The resistance and struggles of the victims, although real, remain defensive, without a conscious and positive alternative project. They live on 'pious hope', in the precise sense that the propositions that they support require agreement of the two parties—the victims and the dominant powers—for their implementation, in conformity with the ideological dogma of consensus. 'Regulation of the financial markets' belongs to this family of illusory 'solutions', hence, in reality, 'non-solutions'. A radical advance demands bold ruptures: 'nationalize the monopolies', in the prospect of advancing socialization through democracy instead of socialization through the market. The descending spiral in which the Euro system is caught offers us an exaggerated example of this path of chaos in action, which, lacking a positive alternative, implies the 'deconstruction' of the established system.

The United States, Europe, and Japan are involved in a descending spiral. Up to now, capital of generalized monopolies has retained the initiative and tirelessly pursued its sole objective: the growing accumulation of monopoly rent, which, in turn, produces the runaway growth of inequality in the distribution of income. Moreover, the growth of the latter itself is weakening. This inequality increases the impossibility of monopoly rent finding an outlet in expansion of the productive system and leads headlong into the growth of the public debt, which offers a possible outlet for the investment of excessive surplus profits. The austerity policies implemented do not permit reduction of the debt (which is their avowed objective) but, on the contrary, produce its continuous growth (which is the real, but unacknowledged, objective). Despite the victims' protests, the electoral majorities (including the left) do not challenge the economy of the monopolies and consequently allow the descending movement to continue indefinitely. Naturally, the growing inequality calls for increasingly authoritarian political management internally and militarism on the world scale. This process of the system's degradation by the exclusive means of the development of its own internal contradictions is again strengthened on the European level and in its Euro sub-system by the constitutional adoption of the rules of a dogmatic liberalism, certainly absurd, but nevertheless completely functional for continuing economic management by the generalized monopolies.

Faced with the same challenge, are the societies of the South involved in conscious struggles? Yes, but at best only partially, as in the struggles of the emergent countries against hegemonism, a move towards the reconstruction of a multipolar world, or in some struggles for democratization of society in combination with social progress, and not separate from it, particularly in Latin America.

Yet the moment is quite favorable for an offensive of workers and peoples. Reproduction of the accumulation of monopoly rent requires, in fact, pauperization of workers in the centers and of peoples in the peripheries. Conditions for constructing an internationalist front are offered on a silver platter to the workers and peoples of the whole planet. However, to take advantage of this exceptional conjuncture they must dare, dare again, always dare. That seems desperately lacking. Are radical left-wing forces going to allow this moment to pass, one that is favorable to facing tomorrow a chaos managed by who knows whom, undoubtedly the most obscurantist forces imaginable?

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Chapter 8
The Countries of the South Must Take Their Own Independent Initiatives

For the second time in contemporary history the imperialist dimension of capitalism is being challenged.[1] Since 1947, the United States of America, the dominating imperialist power of that epoch, proclaimed the division of the world into two spheres, that of the 'free world' and that of 'communist totalitarianism'. The reality of the Third World was flagrantly ignored: it was felt privileged to belong to the 'free world', as it was 'non-communist'. 'Freedom' was considered as applying only to capital, with complete disregard for the realities of colonial and semi-colonial oppression. The following year Jdanov, in his famous report (in fact, Stalin's), which led to the setting up of the Kominform (an attenuated form of the Third International), also divided the world into two, the socialist sphere (the USSR and Eastern Europe) and the capitalist one (the rest of the world). The report ignored the contradictions within the capitalist sphere which opposed the imperialist centres to the peoples and nations of the peripheries who were engaged in struggles for their liberation.

The Jdanov doctrine pursued one main aim: to impose peaceful coexistence and hence to calm the aggressive passions of the United States and their subaltern European and Japanese allies. In exchange, the Soviet Union would accept a low profile, abstaining from interfering in colonial matters that the imperialist powers considered their internal affairs. The liberation movements, including the Chinese revolution, were not supported with any enthusiasm at that time and they carried on by themselves. But their victory (particularly that of China, of course) was to bring about some changes in international power relationships. Moscow did not perceive this until after Bandung, which enabled it, through its support to the countries in conflict with imperialism, to break out of its isolation and become a major actor in world affairs. In a way, it is not wrong to say that the main change in the world system was the result of this first 'Awakening of the South'. Without this knowledge, the later affirmation of the new 'emerging' powers cannot be understood.

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The Jdanov report was accepted without reservation by the European communist parties and of those of Latin America of that era. However, almost immediately it came up against resistance from the communist parties of Asia and the Middle East. This was concealed in the language of that period, for they continued to affirm "the unity of the socialist camp" behind the USSR, but as time went on resistance became more overt with the development of their struggles for regaining independence, particularly after the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949. To my knowledge, no-one has ever written the history of the formulation of the alternative theory, which gave full rein to the independent initiatives of the countries of Asia and Africa, later to crystallize at Bandung in 1955 and then in the constitution of the Non Aligned Movement (from 1960 defined as Asian-African, plus Cuba). The details are buried in the archives of some communist parties (those of China, India, Indonesia, Egypt, Iraq, Iran and perhaps a few others).

Nevertheless I can bear personal witness to what happened, having been lucky enough, since 1950, to participate in one of the groups of reflection that brought together the Egyptian, Iraqi and Iranian communists and some others. Information about the Chinese debate, inspired by Zhou Enlai was not made known to us by Comrade Wang (the link with the journal *Révolution,* whose editorial committee included myself) until much later, in 1963. We heard echoes of the Indian debate and the split that it had provoked, which was confirmed afterwards by the constitution of the CPM. We knew that debates within the Indonesian and Filipino communist parties developed along the same lines.

This history should be written as it will help people to understand that Bandung did not originate in the heads of the nationalist leaders (Nehru and Sukarno particularly, rather less, Nasser) as is implied by contemporary writers. It was the product of a radical leftwing critique which was at that time conducted within the communist parties. The common conclusion of these groups of reflection could be summed up in one sentence: the fight against imperialism brings together, at the world level, the social and political forces whose victories are decisive in opening up to possible socialist advances in the contemporary world.

This conclusion, however, left open a crucial question: who will 'direct' these anti-imperialist battles? To simplify: the bourgeoisie (then called 'national'), whom the communists should then support, or a front of popular classes, directed by the communists and not the bourgeoisies (who were anti-national, in fact)? The answer to this question often changed and was sometimes confused. In 1945 the communist parties concerned were aligned, based on the conclusion that Stalin had formulated: the bourgeoisies everywhere in the world (in Europe, aligned with the United States, as in the colonial and semi-colonial countries—in the language of that era) have "thrown the national flag into the rubbish bin" (Stalin's phrase) and the communists were therefore the only ones who could assemble a united front of the forces that refused to submit to the imperialist, capitalist American order. The same conclusion was reached by Mao in 1942, but only made known (to us) when his *New Democracy* had been translated into Western languages in 1952. This thesis held that for the majority of the peoples of the planet the long road to socialism could only be opened by a "national, popular, democratic, anti-feudal and

anti-imperialist revolution (the language of the day), run by the communists". The underlying message was that other socialist advances were not on the agenda elsewhere, i.e., in the imperialist centres. They could not possibly take shape until after the peoples of the peripheries had inflicted substantial damage on imperialism.

The triumph of the Chinese revolution confirmed this conclusion. The communist parties of South East Asia, in Thailand, Malaysia and Philippines in particular, started liberation struggles inspired by the Vietnamese model. Later, in 1964, Che Guevara held similar views when he called for "one, two, three Vietnams".

The avant-garde proposals for initiatives by the independent and anti-imperialist 'countries of Asia amd Africa', which were formulated by the different communist groups of reflection, were precise and advanced. They are to be found in the Bandung programme and that of the Non-Aligned Movement, of which I gave a systematic presentation in my *L'eveil du Sud* (Awakening of the South). The proposals focussed on the essential need to reconquer control over the accumulation process (development which is auto-centred and delinked from the world economy).

It so happens that some of these proposals were adopted, although with considerable dilutions in certain countries, as from 1955 to 1960, by the governing classes as a whole in both continents. And at the same time the revolutionary struggles waged by all the communist parties of South East Asia were defeated (except in Vietnam, of course). The conclusion would seem to be that the 'national bourgeoisie' had not exhausted its capacity for anti-imperialist struggle. The Soviet Union also came to that conclusion when it decided to support the non-aligned front, while the imperialist Triad declared open warfare against it.

The communists in the countries concerned were then divided between the two tendencies and became involved in painful conflicts that were often confused. Some drew the lesson that it was necessary to 'support' the powers in place that were battling imperialism, although this support should remain 'critical'. Moscow gave wind to their sails by inventing the thesis of the 'non-capitalist way'. Others conserved the essentials of the Maoist thesis, according to which only a front of the popular classes that was independent of the bourgeoisie could lead a successful struggle against imperialism. The conflict between the Chinese communist party and the Soviet Union, which was apparent as from 1957 but officially declared as from 1960, of course confirmed the second tendency among the Asian and African communists.

However, the potential of the Bandung movement wore out within some fifteen years, emphasizing—if it should be needed—the limits of the anti-imperialist programmes of the 'national bourgeoisies'. Thus the conditions were ripe for the imperialist counter-offensive, the '*re-compradorisation*' of the Southern economies, if not—for the most vulnerable—their recolonization.

Nevertheless, as if to give the lie to this return imposed by the facts to the thesis of the definitive and absolute impotence of the national bourgeoisies—Bandung having been, according to this vision, just a 'passing episode' in the cold war context—certain countries of the South have been able to impose themselves as 'emerging' in the new globalization dominated by imperialism. But 'emerging' in what way? Emerging markets open to the expansion of capital of the oligopolies belonging to the imperialist Triad? Or emerging nations capable of imposing a genuine

revision of the terms of globalization and reducing the power exercised by the oligopolies, while reconducting the accumulation to their own national development? The question of the social content of the powers in place in the emerging countries (and in the other countries of the periphery) and the prospects that this opens up or closes is once again on the agenda. It is a debate that cannot be avoided: what will—or could—be the 'post-crisis' world?

The crisis of the late imperialist capitalism of the generalized, financialized and globalized oligopolies is patent. But even before it passed into the new phase inaugurated by the financial collapse of 2008, people had begun to stir out of their lethargy which had set in after the first wave of their struggles for the emancipation of the workers and people had worn itself out.

Latin America, which had been absent during the Bandung era (in spite of Cuba's efforts with the Tricontinental), this time seems to be even in advance of the rest of the movement.

There are of course many important new aspects in the present situation, but the same questions that were being posed in the 1950s are once again on the table. Will the South (emerging countries and others) be capable of taking independent strategic initiatives? Will popular forces be capable of imposing the transformations in the power systems that will be the only way of making serious progress? Can bridges be built that associate the anti-imperialist and popular struggles in the South with the progress of a socialist conscience in the North?

I will refrain from giving quick answers to these difficult questions that only the development of struggles will resolve. But the importance of these discussions in which the radical intellectuals of our era should commit themselves should not be underestimated, nor the proposals that may result from such discussions.

The conclusions reached by the groups of reflection of the 1950s formulated the challenge in terms that have remained essentially the same ever since: the peoples of the periphery must undertake national construction (supported by regional plans and those of the South as a whole), which are auto-centred and delinked; they cannot take this route unless their struggles are carried out in a socialist perspective; for this reason they must shed their illusions about the false alternative, that of 'catching up' in the globalized capitalist system. Bandung embodied this independent option but within the limits later to be revealed, as history unfolded.

Would the results be better now, when a second 'Awakening of the South' is on the horizon? Above all, will it be possible this time to build convergences between the struggles in the North and in the South? These were lamentably lacking in the Bandung epoch. The peoples of the imperialist centres then finally aligned behind their imperialist leaders. The social-democrat project of the time would in fact have been difficult to imagine without the imperialist rent that benefited the opulent societies of the North. Bandung and the Non Aligned Movement were thus seen as just an episode in the cold war, perhaps even manipulated by Moscow. In the North, there was little understanding of the real dimensions of this first emancipatory wave of the countries of Asia and Africa which, however, was convincing enough for Moscow to give it support.

The challenge of constructing an anti-imperialist internationalism of workers and peoples remains to be tackled.

Chapter 9
The Democratic Fraud and the Universalist Alternative

9.1 The Democratic Fraud Challenges us to Invent Tomorrow's Democracy

Universal suffrage is a recent conquest, beginning with workers' struggles in a few European countries (England, France, Holland, and Belgium) and then progressively extending throughout the world. Today, everywhere on the planet, it goes without saying that the demand for delegating supreme power to an honestly elected, multiparty assembly defines the democratic aspiration as well as guaranteeing its realization—or so it is claimed[1].

Marx himself put great hopes on such universal suffrage as a possible 'peaceful path to socialism'. Yet, I have noted that on this score Marx's expectations were refuted by history (cf. *Marx et la démocratie*). I think that the reason for the failure of electoral democracy to produce real change is not hard to find: all hitherto existing societies have been based on a dual system of exploitation of labor (in various forms) and of concentration of the state's powers on behalf of the ruling class. This fundamental reality results in a relative 'depoliticization/disacculturation' of very large segments of society. And this result, broadly designed and implemented to fulfill the systemic function expected of it, is simultaneously the condition for reproduction of the system without changes other than those it can control and absorb—the condition of its stability. What is called the 'grass roots', so to speak, signifies a country in deep slumber. Elections by universal suffrage under these conditions, are guaranteed to produce a sure victory for conservatism, albeit sometimes a 'reformist' conservatism. This is why never in history has there been real change resulting from this mode of governance based on 'consensus' (i.e. the absence of change). All changes tending toward real social transformation, even radical reforms, have resulted from struggles waged by what, in electoral terms,

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may appear to be 'minorities'. Without the initiative of such minorities, the motive force of society, no change is possible.

Such struggles, engaged in by such 'minorities', always end up—when the alternatives proposed are clearly and correctly defined—by carrying along (previously silent) majorities and may by universal suffrage receive ratification, which arrives after—never before—victory. In our contemporary world 'consensus' (its boundaries defined by universal suffrage) is more conservative than ever. In the centers of the world-system the consensus is pro-imperialist. Not in the sense that it implies hatred or contempt for the other peoples who are its victims, but in the everyday sense that the permanence of the flow of imperialist rent is accepted because that is the condition for overall social reproduction, the guarantor of its 'opulence' in contrast to the poverty of the others. In the peripheries, the responses of peoples to the challenge (pauperization resulting from the process of capitalist/imperialist accumulation) is still muddled, in the sense that they are fated always to carry with them a dose of retrograde illusions of a return to a better past.

In these conditions, recourse to 'elections' is always conceived by the dominant powers as the best possible way to rein in the movement, to end the possibility that the struggles become radicalized. In 1968 some said that 'elections are for assholes', and that view was not unconfirmed by the facts. An elected assembly, right away—as today in Tunisia and Egypt—serves only to put an end to 'disorder', to 'restore stability'. To change everything so that nothing changes. So should we give up on elections? Not at all. But how to bring together new, rich, inventive forms of democratization through which elections can be used in a way other than is conceived by the conservative forces? Such is the challenge.

9.2 The Democratic Farce's Stage Scenery

This stage scenery was invented by the Founding Fathers of the United States, with the very clearly expressed intention of keeping electoral democracy from becoming an instrument that could be used by the people to call in question the social order based on private property (and slavery!). With that in mind, their Constitution was based on (indirect) election of a president (a sort of 'elective monarch') holding in his hands some essential powers. The 'bipartisanism', to which presidential election campaigns under these conditions naturally gravitates, tends progressively to become what it now is: the expression of a 'single party'. Of course, ever since the end of the nineteenth century this has represented the interest of monopoly capital, addressing itself to 'clienteles' that view themselves as having differing interests.

The democratic fraud then displays itself as offering 'alternatives' (in this case, the Democrats and the Republicans) that cannot ever rise to the level required by a real alternative (offering the possibility of new, radically different, options). But without the presence of real alternative perspectives democracy is nonexistent. The farce is based on 'consensus' (!) ideology, which excludes by definition

serious conflicts between interests and between visions of the future. The invention of 'party primaries' inviting the whole electorate (whether its components are said to be leftist or rightist!) to express its choices of candidates for the two false adversaries accentuates still further that deviation so annihilating for the meaning of elections.

Jean Monnet, a true anti-democrat is honored today in Brussels, where his intentions to copy the U.S. model were fully understood, as the founder of the 'new European democracy'. Monnet deployed all his efforts, which were scrupulously implemented in the European Union, to deprive elected assemblies of their powers and transfer them to 'committees of technocrats'. To be sure, the democratic fraud works without big problems in the opulent societies of the imperialist triad (the United States, Western Europe, and Japan) precisely because it is underwritten by the imperialist rent (see my book *The Law of Worldwide Value*). But its persuasive authority is also bolstered by the consensus "individualist" ideology; by the respect for 'rights' (themselves acquired by struggles, as we are never told), and by the institution of an independent judiciary (even though that of the United States is partially based—as in most of the 'sovereign' states—on elected judges who have to finance their election campaigns by appealing to the ruling class and its opinion-makers); and by the complex structure of the pyramidal institutions charged with guaranteeing rights.

Historically, continental Europe has not long experienced the calm waters of the democratic farce. In the nineteenth century (and even up to 1945) struggles for democracy, both those inspired by the capitalist and middle-class bourgeoisies and those expressing the working masses, ran up against resistance from the *anciens regimes*. Hence their chaotic pattern of advances and retreats. Marx thought that such resistance was an obstacle fortunately unknown in the United States.

He was wrong, and underestimated the extent to which, in a "pure" capitalist system (like that of the United States in comparison to Europe) the "overdetermination" of political processes, that is to say the automatic conformity of changes in the ideological and political superstructure to those required for management of society by the capitalist monopolies, would inevitably lead to what conventional sociologists call 'totalitarianism'. This is a term that applies even more to the capitalist imperialist world than anywhere else. (I here refer back to what I have written elsewhere about 'overdetermination' and the openings which it makes available.)

In nineteenth century Europe (and also, though to a lesser degree, in the United States) the historical coalitions put together to ensure the power of capital were, by the force of circumstance—the diversity of classes and of sub-classes—complex and changeable. Accordingly, electoral combats could sometimes appear to be really democratic. But over time, as the diversity of capitalist coalitions gave way to the domination of monopoly capital, those appearances dwindled away.

The Liberal Virus (as one of my books is titled) did the rest: Europe aligned itself more and more on the American model. Conflicts among the major capitalist powers helped cement the components of the historical coalitions, bringing about, by way of nationalism, the domination of capital. It even happened—Germany and

Italy being particularly exemplary—that 'national consensus' was made to replace the democratic program of the bourgeois revolution. This deformation of democracy is now virtually complete. The Communist parties of the Third International tried in their way to oppose it, even though their 'alternative' (modeled on the USSR) remained of questionable attractiveness. Having failed to build lasting alternative coalitions, they ended up capitulating, going over to submission to the system of democratic electoral farce. So doing, the part of the radical left consisting of their heirs (in Europe, the 'United Left' grouping in the Strasbourg parliament) gave up any perspective of real 'electoral victory'. It is happy to survive on the second-class seats allotted to 'minorities' (at most 5–10 % of the 'voting population'). Transformed into coteries of elected representatives whose sole concern—taking the place of 'strategy'—is to hang on to these wretched places in the system, this radical left gives up on really being anything of the sort. That this plays into the hands of neofascist demagogues is, in these conditions, unsurprising.

A discourse styling itself 'postmodernist', which quite simply refuses to recognize the scope of the democratic farce's destructive effects, incorporates submission to it. What matter elections, they say, what counts is elsewhere: in 'civil society' (a muddled concept to which I shall return) where individuals are what the liberal virus claims them—falsely—to be, the active subjects of history. Antonio Negri's 'philosophy', which I have criticized elsewhere, is an expression of this desertion. But the democratic farce, unchallenged in the opulent societies of the imperialist triad, does not work in the system's peripheries. There, in the storm zone, the established order does not enjoy any legitimacy sufficient to stabilize society. So, then, does the the possibility of a real alternative reveal itself in the watermark of the paper on which the 'Southern awakenings' that characterized the twentieth century, and which go on making their way in the twenty-first century, are written by history?

9.3 Theories and Practices of the Vanguards and of the Enlightened Despotisms

The current storm is not synonymous with revolution, but is only the potential carrier of revolutionary advances. Not simple are the responses of the peripheral peoples, whether inspired by radical socialist ideals—at first, anyway (Russia, China, Vietnam, and Cuba)—or by national liberation and social progress (in Latin America, in Asia and Africa during the Bandung period). They bring, to varying degrees, components with a universalist and progressive outlook together with others of a deeply retrogressive nature. To unravel the conflicting and/or complementary interferences among these tendencies will help us to formulate—further on in this text—some possible forms of genuine democratic advances.

The historical Marxisms of the Third International (Russian Marxism-Leninism and Chinese Maoism) deliberately and completely rejected any retrograde outlook. They chose to look toward the future, in what was in the full sense of the term

a universalist emancipating spirit. This option was undoubtedly made easier, in Russia, by a long preparatory period in which the (bourgeois) 'westernizers' vanquished the 'Slavophile' and 'Eurasian' allies of the autocracy and, in China, by the Taiping Uprising (I here refer you to my work: *The Paris Commune and the Taiping Revolution*).

At the same time, those historical Marxisms committed themselves to a certain conceptualization of the role of 'vanguards' in social transformation. They gave an institutionalized form to that option, symbolized as 'The Party'. It cannot be said that this option was ineffective. Quite to the contrary, it was certainly at the origin of the victory of those revolutions. The hypothesis that the minority vanguard would win support from the immense majority proved to be well founded. But it is equally true that later history showed the limits of such effectiveness. For it is certain that maintenance of centralized power in the hands of these 'vanguards' was far from uninvolved in the subsequent derailment of the 'socialist' systems that they claimed to have established.

Were the theory and practice of those historical Marxisms that of 'enlightened despotism'? One can say so only on condition of specifying what were and—progressively—became the aims of those 'enlightened despotisms'. In any case, they were resolutely opposed to *volkish* nostalgia. Their behavior in regard to religion—which they viewed as nothing but obscurantism—testify to that. I have expressed myself elsewhere (*L'internationale de l'obscurantisme*) about the qualifications which need be appended to that judgment.

The vanguard concept was also broadly adopted elsewhere beyond those (Chinese and Russian) revolutionary societies. It was the basis for the Communist parties of the whole world as they existed between 1920 and 1980. It found its place in the contemporary national/populist third-world regimes. Moreover, this vanguard concept gave decisive importance to theory and ideology, implying in turn putting similar importance on the role of (revolutionary) 'intellectuals' or, rather, of the intelligentsia.

'Intelligentsia' is not synonymous with the educated middle classes, still less with the managers, bureaucrats, technocrats, or professoriate (in Anglo-Saxon jargon, the 'elites'). It refers to a social group that emerges as such in some societies under specific conditions and becomes then an active, sometimes decisive, agent. Outside Russia and China, analogous formations could be recognized in France, in Italy, and perhaps in other countries—but certainly not in Great Britain, the United States, nor generally in northern Europe.

In France, during most of the twentieth century, the intelligentsia held a major place in the country's history, as, for that matter, is recognized by the best historians. This was, perhaps, an indirect effect of the Paris Commune during which the ideal of building a more advanced stage of civilization beyond capitalism found expression as nowhere else (see my article on the Commune). In Italy the post-fascist Communist Party had an analogous function.

As Luciana Castillana lucidly analyzes it, the Communists—a vanguard strongly supported by the working class but always an electoral minority—were actually the sole makers of Italian democracy. They exercised 'in opposition'—at

the time—a real power in society much greater than when associated with 'government' subsequently! Their actual suicide, inexplicable otherwise than as result of the mediocrity of their post-Berlinguer leadership, buried with them both the Italian State and Italian democracy.

This intelligentsia phenomenon never existed in the United States nor in Protestant Northern Europe. What is called there 'the elite'—the terminology is significant—scarcely comprises anyone but lackeys (including 'reforming' ones) of the system. The empiricist/pragmatist philosophy, holding the entire stage as far as social thought is concerned, has certainly reinforced the conservative effects of the Protestant Reformation—whose critique I stated in *Eurocentrism.* Rudolf Rocker, the German anarchist, is one of the few European thinkers to have expressed a judgment close to mine; but since Weber (and despite Marx) it is has been fashionable to unthinkingly celebrate the Reformation as a progressive advance.

In the peripheral societies in general, beyond the flagrant cases of Russia and China, and for the same reasons, the initiatives taken by 'vanguards', often intelligentsia-like, profited from the adhesion and support of broad popular majorities. The most frequent form of those political crystallizations whose interventions were decisive for the 'Southern Awakening' was that of populism. A theory and practicescoffed at by the (Anglo-Saxon style, i.e., pro-system) 'elites', but defended and accordingly rehabili-tated by Ernesto Laclau with solid arguments that I will very largely make my own.

Of course, there are as many 'populisms' as there are historical experiences that can be called such. Populisms are often linked to 'charismatic' figures whose 'thought' is accepted, undiscussed, as authoritative. The real social and national advances linked to them under some specific conditions have led me to term them 'national/populist' regimes. But it must be understood that those advances were never based on ordinary 'bourgeois' democratic practices, still less by the inception of practices going still further, like those possible ones which I will outline further on in this text. Such was the case in Ataturk's Turkey, probably the initiator of this model in the Middle East, and later in Nasser's Egypt, the Baathist (Iraqi and Syrian) regimes in their initial stages, and Algeria under the FLN. During the 1940s and 1950s, under different conditions, similar experiments were undertaken in Latin America. This 'formula', because it answers to real needs and possibilities, is far from having lost its chance of renewal. So I gladly use the term 'national/populist' for certain ongoing experiments in Latin America without neglecting to point out that on the level of democratization they have incontestably entered on advances unknown to those earlier 'national/populisms'.

I have put forward analyses dealing with the reasons for the success of advances realized in this domain by several Middle-Eastern countries (Afghanistan, South Yemen, Sudan, and Iraq) which appeared more promising than others, and also the causes of their tragic failures. Whatever the case, one must be on guard against generalizations and simplifications like those of most Western commentators, who look only at the "democracy question" as boiled down to the formula that I have described as the democratic farce. In the peripheral countries the farce sometimes appears as

a fantastic burlesque. Without being 'democrats' some leaders, charismatic or not, of national/populist regimes have been progressive 'big reformers'. Nasser was exemplary of these. But others have scarcely been anything but incoherent clowns (Khadafi) or ordinary 'unenlightened' despots (quite uncharismatic, to boot) like Ben Ali, Mubarak, and many others. For that matter, those dictators initiated no national/populist experiments. All they did was to organize the pillage of their countries by mafias personally associated to them. Thus, like Suharto and Marcos, they were simply executive agents of the imperialist powers which, moreover, hailed them and supported their powers to the very end.

9.4 The Ideology of Cultural Nostalgia, Enemy of Democracy

The specific limits of each and of all national/populist experiments worthy of the name 'populist' originate in the objective conditions characterizing the societies comprising the periphery of today's capitalist/imperialist world—conditions obviously diverse. But beyond that diversity some major converging factors shed some light on the reasons for those experiments' successes and then for their retrogressions.

That aspirations for a 'Return to the Past' persist is not the result of thoroughgoing 'backwardness' (as in the usual discourse on this subject) among the peoples involved. Their persistence gives a correct measure of the challenge to be confronted. All the peoples and nations of the peripheries were not only subject to fierce economic exploitation by imperialist capital: they were, by the same token, equally subjected to cultural aggression. With the greatest contempt the dignity of their cultures, their languages, their customs, and their histories were negated. There is nothing surprising in these victims of external or internal colonialism (notably the Indian populations of the Americas) naturally linking their political and social liberation to the restoration of their national dignity. But in turn, these legitimate aspirations are a temptation to look exclusively toward the past in hope of there finding the solution to today's and tomorrow's problems. So there is a real risk of seeing the movements of awakening and liberation among these peoples getting stuck in tragic blind alleys as soon as they mistake retrogressive nostalgia for their sought-for highroad of renewal.

The history of contemporary Egypt illustrates perfectly the transformation from necessary complementarity between a universalist vision open to the future, yet linked to the restoration of past dignity, into a conflict between two options formulated in absolute terms: either 'Westernize!' (in the common usage of that term, implying denial of the past) or else (uncritically) 'Back To The Past!'

The Viceroy Mohamed Ali (1804–1849) and, until the 1870s, the Khedives, chose a modernization that would be open to the adoption of formulas reflecting European models. It cannot be said that this choice was one of 'Westernization' on the cheap. The heads of the Egyptian state gave the highest importance to modern

industrialization of the country as against merely adopting the European model of consumer markets. They committed themselves to assimilation of European models, linking it with renewal of their national culture to whose evolution in a secular direction it would contribute. Their attempts to support linguistic renovation bear witness to that. Of course, their European model was that of capitalism and no doubt they had no accurate conception of the imperialist nature of European capitalism. But they should bear no reproach for that. When Khedive Ismail proclaimed his aim 'to make Egypt into a European country', he was fifty years ahead of Ataturk. He saw 'Europeanization' as part of national rebirth, not as a renunciation of it.

The inadequacies of that epoch's cultural *Nahda* (its inability to grasp the meaning of the European Renaissance), and the retrograde nostalgia embodied in its main concepts—on which I have expressed myself elsewhere—are no mystery.

Indeed, it is precisely this retrograde outlook which was to take hold over the national-renewal movement at the end of the nineteenth century. I have put forward an explanation for this: with the defeat of the 'modernist' project that had held the scene from 1800 to 1870 Egypt was plunged into regression. But the ideology that tried to counter that decline took shape in this retrogressive period and was marked by all the birth defects implicit in that fact. Moustapha Kamel and Mohamed Farid, the founders of the new National Party (*Al hisb al watani*), chose back-to-the-past as the focal point of their combat—as their 'Ottomanist' (seeking the support of Istanbul against the English) illusions, as well as others, reveal.

History was to prove the futility of that option. The popular and national revolution of 1919–1920 was not led by the Nationalist Party but by its 'modernist' rival, the Wafd. Taha Hussein even adopted the slogan of Khedive Ismail—'Europeanize Egypt'—and to that end supported the formation of a new university to marginalize Al Azhar.

The retrograde tendency, legacy of the Nationalist Party, then slipped into insignificance. Its leader, Ahmad Hussein, was in the 1930s merely the head of a minuscule, pro-fascist, party. But this tendency was to undergo a strong revival among the group of 'Free Officers' that overthrew the monarchy in 1952.

The ambiguity of the Nasserist project resulted from this regression in the debate over the nature of the challenge to be confronted. Nasser tried to link a certain industrialization-based modernization, once again not on the cheap, with support to retrograde cultural illusions. It mattered little that the Nasserists thought of their project as being within a socialist (obviously beyond a nineteenth century ken) perspective. Their attraction to *volkisch* cultural illusion was always there. This was demonstrated by their choices concerning the 'modernization of Al Azhar', of which I did a critique. Currently, the conflict between the 'modernist, universalist' visions of some and the 'integrally medievalistic' visions of others holds center-stage in Egypt. The former are henceforward advocated mainly by the radical left (in Egypt the communist tradition, powerful in the immediate years after Second World War) and getting a broad audience among the enlightened middle classes, the labor unions, and, even more so, by the new generations. The back-to-the-past vision has slipped even further to the right with the Muslim

Brotherhood, and has adopted its stance from the most archaic conception of Islam, theWahhabism promoted by the Saudis.

It is not very difficult to contrast the evolution that shut Egypt into its blind alley to the path chosen by China since the Taiping revolution, taken up and deepened by Maoism: that the construction of the future starts with radical critique of the past. 'Emergence' into the modern world and, accordingly, deploying effective responses to its challenges including entrance onto the path of democratization, guidelines for which I will put forward further on in this text, has as its precondition the refusal to allow retrograde cultural nostalgia to obscure the central focus of renewal.

So it is not by chance that China finds itself at the vanguard of today's 'emerging' countries. Nor is it by chance that in the Middle East it is Turkey, not Egypt, that is pedaling in the race. Turkey, even that of the 'Islamist' AKP, profits from Kemalism's earlier breakaway. But there is a decisive difference between China and Turkey; China's 'modernist' option is supposed to reflect a 'socialist' perspective (and China is in a hegemonic conflict with the United States, that is to say, with the collective imperialism of the Triad) conveying a chance for progress while the 'modernity' option of today's Turkey, in which no escape from the logic of contemporary globalization is envisaged, has no future. It seems successful, but only provisionally so.

In all the countries of the broader South (the peripheries) the combination of modernist and retrogressive tendencies, obviously in very diverse forms, is to be found. The confusion resulting from this association finds one of its most striking displays in the profusion of inept discourses about supposed 'democratic forms in past societies', uncritically praised to the skies. Thus independent India sings praises to the *panchayat*, Muslims to the *shura*, and Africans to the 'Speaking Tree', as though these outlived social forms had anything to do with the challenges of the modern world. Is India really the biggest (in number of voters) democracy in the world? Well, this electoral democracy is and will remain a farce until radical criticism of the caste system (a very real legacy of its past) has been carried through to the end: the abolition of the castes themselves. *Shura* remains the vehicle for implementation of *Sharia* (Islamic canonical law), interpreted in that word's most reactionary sense—the enemy of democracy.

The Latin American peoples are today confronted with the same problem. It is easy, once one realizes the nature of Iberian internal colonialism, to understand the legitimacy of the 'indigenist' demands. Still, some of those 'indigenist' discourses are very uncritical of the Indian pasts at issue. But others are indeed critical and propose concepts linking in a radically progressive way the requirements of universalism to the potential to be found in the evolution of their historical legacy. In this regard, the current Bolivian discussions are probably able to make a rich contribution. François Houtart (*El concepto de Sumai Kwasai*) has made an enlightening critical analysis of the indigenist discourse in question. All ambiguity vanishes in the light of this remarkable study, which passes in review what, as it seems to me, is probably the totality of discourse on this subject.

The contribution, a negative one, of retrograde cultural illusion to construction of the modern world such as it is, cannot be attributed to the peripheral peoples. In

Europe, outside its northwestern quadrant, the bourgeoisies were too weak to carry out revolutions like those of England and France. The 'national' goal, especially in Germany and Italy and, later, elsewhere in the eastern and southern parts of the continent, functioned as means of popular mobilization while screening off the nature of such nationalism as a compromise, half bourgeois/half *ancien regime*. The retrograde cultural illusions in these cases were not so much 'religious' as 'ethnic', and were based on an ethnocentric definition of the nation (Germany) or on a mythologized reading of Roman history (Italy). Nazism and fascism—there is the disaster that illustrates the arch-reactionary, surely anti-democratic, nature of *volkisch* cultural nostalgia in its 'national' forms.

9.5 The Universalist Alternative: Full and Authentic Democratization and the Socialist Perspective

I am going to speak here of democratization, not of democracy. The latter, reduced as it is to formulas imposed by the dominant powers, is a farce, as I have said (in "The Democratic Fraud Challenges Us to Invent Tomorrow's Democracy"). The electoral farce produces an impotent pseudo-parliament and a government responsible only to the IMF and the WTO, the instrumentalities of the imperialist triad's monopolies. The democratic farce is then capped off with a 'humanrightsish' discourse that provides for respect of the right to protest—on condition that protest never gets close to mounting a real challenge to the supreme power of the monopolies. Beyond that line it is to be labeled 'terrorism' and criminalized.

Democratization, in contrast, considered as full and complete—that is, democratization involving all aspects of social life including, of course, economic management—can only be an unending andunbounded process, the result of popular struggles and popular inventiveness. Democratization has no meaning, no reality, unless it mobilizes those inventive powers in the perspective of building a moreadvanced stage of human civilization. Thus, it can never be clothed in a rigid, formulaic, ready-to-wear outfit. Nevertheless, it is no less necessary to trace out the governing lines of movement for its general direction and the definition of the strategic objectives for its possible stages.

The fight for democratization is a combat. It therefore requires mobilization, organization, strategic vision, tactical sense, choice of actions, and politicization of struggles. Undoubtedly these forms of activity cannot be decreed in advance starting from sanctified dogma. But the need to identify them is unavoidable. For it really is a matter of driving back the established systems of power with the perspective of replacing them with a different system of powers. Undoubtedly any sanctified formula of 'the' revolution which would completely and at once substitute the power of the people for the capitalist order is to be abandoned. Revolutionary advances are possible, on the basis of the development of real, new, people's powers that would drive back those power centers that continue to protect the principles underlying and reproducing social inequality. Besides which, Marx never

expounded any theory of 'the great day of revolution and definitive solutions'; to the contrary, he always insisted that revolution is a long transitionmarked by a conflict between powers—the former ones in decline and the new powers on the rise.

To give up on the question of power is to throw out the baby with the bathwater. Only someone of extreme naïvete could ever believe that society can be transformed without destroying, albeit progressively, the established system of power. As long as the established powers remain what they are, social change, far from dispossessing them, leaves them able to co-opt it, to take it over, to make it reinforce, rather than weaken, capitalist power. The sad fate of environmentalism, made into a new field for the expansion of capital, bears witness. To dodge the question of power is to place social movements in a situation in which they cannot go on the offensive because they are forced to remain on the defensive in resistance to the attacks of the power-holders who, as such, retain the initiative. Nothing astonishing, then, in Antonio Negri, the 'prophet' of that modish anti-power litany, fleeing back from Marx to St. Francis of Assisi, his original starting point. Nor anything surprising in that his theses should be played up by the *New York Times*. I will here put forward several major strategic objectives for the theoretical and political discussion about social and political struggles (inseparable one from the other), which must perpetually confront the practical problems of those struggles, of their successes and failures. First of all, to reinforce the powers of workers in their workplaces, in their daily struggles against capital. That, it is said, is what they have trade-unions for. Indeed, but only if the unions are real instrumentalities for struggle. Which they scarcely ever are any more, especially the 'big unions' that are supposedly powerful because they group together large majorities among their target groups of workers. Such seeming strength is really their weakness, because those unions believe themselves bound to make only those extremely modest demands that might be acceptable to the employer.

What reason is there to be astonished that the working classes of Germany and Great Britain (called 'strong union' countries) have accepted the drastic downward adjustments imposed by capital over the course of the last thirty years whereas the 'French unions', grouping as members only minorities of the class and thus supposedly 'weak', have better (or less badly) resisted such adjustments? This reality simply reminds us that organizations of activists, by definition minoritarian (since it is impossible that the class as a whole should be made up of activists), are more able than 'mass' (and thus made up largely of non-activists) unions to lead majorities into struggle.

Another possible field of struggle to establish new forms of power is that of local government. I certainly want to avoid hasty generalizations in this area—either by affirming that decentralization is always a gain for democracy or, on the other hand, that centralization is needed to 'change the power-structure'. Decentralization may well be co-opted by 'local notables', often no less reactionary than the agents of the central power. But it can also, as a result of the strategic actions of progressive forces in struggle and of local conditions—sometimes favorable, sometimes unfavorable—fill out or substitute for general advances in the creation of new popular power structures.

The Paris Commune understood this and so projected a federation of Communes. The communards knew that on this question they were carrying forward the tradition of the Mountain (Jacobins) of Year One (1793). For the latter, contrary to what is unreflectingly said (how often do we hear that the Jacobin 'centralists' completed the work of the Monarchy!), were federalists (is the Fête de la Fédération to be forgotten)? 'Centralization' was the later work of the Thermidorian Reaction, capped off by Bonaparte.

But 'decentralization' is still a dubious term if it is counterposed as an absolute to another absolute, that of 'centralization'. The challenge confronting the struggle for democratization is to link the two concepts to each other.

The problem of multiple—local and central—power centers is of crucial importance for those countries that, for various historical reasons, exist as heterogeneous agglomerations. In the Andean countries, and more generally in 'Latin America'—which ought to be termed Indo/Afro/Latin America—the construction of specific power structures ('specific' here denoting that they are endowed with areas of genuine autonomy) is the necessary condition for the rebirth of the Indian nations, without which social emancipation has scarcely any meaning.

Feminism and environmentalism are likewise fields of conflict between social forces whose perspective is that of overall social emancipation and the conservative or reformist power centers consecrated to the perpetuation of the conditions for perpetual reproduction of the capitalist system. It is certainly out of place to treat them as 'specialized' struggles, because the apparently specialized demands that they put forward are inseparable from overall social transformation. However, not all movements that consider themselves feminist or environmentalist see matters that way.

Coherent linkage of struggles in the diverse fields mentioned here—as well as others—requires constructing institutionalized forms of their interdependence. It is a matter, again, of displaying creative imagination. There is no need to wait for permission from the actual laws to start setting up institutionalized systems (informal, maybe 'illegal'), by permanent and de facto compulsory employer/employee negotiation, for example, to impose equality between men and women, or to subject all important public or private investment decisions to thorough environmental review.

Real advances in the directions here advocated would create a duality of powers—like that which Marx envisioned for the long socialist transition to the higher stage of human civilization, communism. They would allow elections by universal suffrage to go in a direction quite different from that offered by democracy-as-farce. But in this case, as in others, truly meaningful elections can take place only after victory, not before.

The propositions put forward here—and many other possible ones—have no place in the dominant discourse about 'civil society'. Rather, they run counter to that discourse which, rather like 'postmodernist' ravings à la Negri, is the direct heir of the U.S. 'consensus' ideological tradition. A discourse promoted, uncritically repeated, by tens of thousands of NGOs and by their requisite representatives at all the Social Forums. We're dealing with an ideology that accepts the existing

regime (i.e. monopoly capitalism) in all its essentials. It thus has a useful role to play on behalf of capitalist power. It keeps its gears provided with oil. It pretends to 'change the world' while promoting a sort of 'opposition' with no power to change anything.

9.6 Three Conclusions

(1) The virus of liberalism still has devastating effects. It has resulted in an "ideological adjustment" perfectly fitted to promoting the expansion of capitalism, an expansion becoming ever more barbaric. It has persuaded big majorities, even among the younger generation, that they had to content themselves with 'living in the present moment', to grasp whatever is immediately at hand, to forget the past, and to pay no heed to the future—on the pretext that utopian imaginings might produce monsters. It has convinced them that the established system allows 'the flourishing of the individual' (which it really does not). Pretentious, supposedly novel, academic formulations— 'postmodernism', 'postcolonialism', 'cultural studies', Negri-like animadversions—confer patents of legitimacy to capitulation of the critical spirit and the inventive imagination.
The disarray stemming from such interiorized submission is certainly among the causes of the 'religious revival'. By that I refer to the recrudescence of conservative and reactionary interpretations, religious and quasi-religious, ritualistic and 'communitarian'. As I have written, the One God (monotheism) remarries with alacrity the One Mammon (moneytheism).
Of course I exclude from this judgment those interpretations of religion that deploy their sense of spirituality to justify taking sides with all social forces struggling for emancipation. But the former are dominant, the latter a minority and often marginalized. Other, no less reactionary, ideological formulas make up in the same way for the void left by the liberalism virus: of this "nationalisms" and ethnic or quasi-ethnic communalisms are splendid examples.

(2) Diversity is, most fortunately, one of the world's finest realities. But its thoughtless praise entails dangerous confusions. For my part, I have suggested making conspicuous the heritage-diversities which are what they are, and can only be distinguished as positive for the project of emancipation after being critically examined. I want to avoid confusing such diversity of heritage with the diversity of formulations that look toward invention of the future and toward emancipation.
For in that regard there is as much diversity both of analyses, with their underlying cultural and ideological bases, and of proposals for strategic lines of struggle. The First International counted Marx, Bakunin, and followers of Proudhon within its ranks. A fifth international will likewise have to choose diversity as its trump suit. I envisage that it cannot 'exclude': it must

be a regroupment of the various schools of Marxists (including even marked 'dogmatists'); of authentic radical reformers who nevertheless prefer to concentrate on goals that are possible in the short term, rather than on distant perspectives; of liberation theologians; of thinkers and activists promoting national renewal within the perspective of universal emancipation; and of feminists and environmentalists who likewise are committed to that perspective. *To become clearly conscious of the imperialist nature of the established system is the fundamental condition without which there is no possibility of such a regroupment of activists really working together for a single cause.* A fifth international cannot but be clearly anti-imperialist. It cannot content itself with remaining at the level of 'humanitarian' interventions like those that the dominant powers offer in place of solidarity and support to the liberation struggles of the Periphery's peoples, nations, and States. And even beyond such regroupment, broad alliances will have to be sought with all democratic forces and movements struggling against democracy-farce's betrayals.

(3) If I insist on the anti-imperialist dimension of the combats to be waged, it is because that is the condition without which no convergence is possible between the struggles within the North and those within the South of the planet. I have already said that the weakness—and that is the least one can say—of Northern anti-imperialist consciousness was the main reason for the limited nature of the advances that the Periphery's peoples had hitherto been able to realize, and then of their retrogression.

The construction of a perspective of convergent struggles runs up against difficulties whose mortal peril to it must not be underestimated. In the North it runs up against the still broad adhesion to the consensus ideology that legitimizes the democratic farce and is made acceptable thanks to the corrupting effects of the imperialist rent. Nevertheless, the ongoing offensive of monopoly capital against the Northern workers themselves might well help them to become conscious that the imperialist monopolies are indeed their common enemy.

Will the unfolding movements toward organized and politicized reconstruction go so far as to understand and teach that the capitalist monopolies are to be expropriated, nationalized in order to be socialized? Until that breaking point has been reached the ultimate power of the capitalist/imperialist monopolies will remain untouched. Any defeats that the South might inflict on those monopolies, reducing the amounts siphoned from them in imperialist rent, can only increase the chances of Northern peoples getting out of their rut. But in the South it still runs up against conflicting expressions of an envisioned future: universalist or backward-looking? Until that conflict has been decided in favor of the former, whatever the Southern peoples might gain in their liberation struggles will remain fragile, limited, and vulnerable. Only serious advances North and South in the directions here indicated will make it possible for the progressive historic bloc to be born.

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Chapter 10
Land Reforms: Desirable Land Tenure Reforms in Africa and Asia

10.1 Introduction

This document focuses on the land tenure reforms that would be required over a large part of Africa and Asia in the event that future developments are designed to benefit the whole of society, its popular and working classes in particular and, of course, the peasants (over half the population of Asia and Africa), and seek the reduction of inequality and the radical eradication of 'poverty'. This option is one which the institutions and mechanisms that are actually generating poverty refuse to promote.[1]

This development paradigm involves combination of a 'mixed' macro economy (combining private enterprise with public planning) based on the democratisation of market management and the state and its interventions, and a decision to opt for agricultural development based on peasant family farms.

The implementation of this set of basic principles, for which it would clearly be necessary to define specific methods for each country and phase of development, would lead to the formation of an 'alternative' on a national scale. It would, of course, have to be accompanied by an evolution to support it both regionally and globally through the construction of an alternative globalisation that would be negotiated rather than imposed unilaterally by dominant transnational capital, the collective imperialism of the triad (the United States, Europe, Japan) and United States hegemonic tendencies.

We only aim to deal here with a single aspect of this complex problem, namely, the rules governing access to the use of farmland. These rules must be created in a way that 'integrates rather than excludes', that is to say, a way that allows all farmers the right of access to land, which is a fundamental condition of the continued existence of a 'peasant society'. This basic right is certainly not enough by itself. It would have to be supported by policies enabling peasant family farms to

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produce their goods in a way that would ensure the growth of national production (which in turn would guarantee a secure food-supply for the country) and a parallel improvement in the real income of all the peasants concerned. It is a question of implementing a range of macroeconomic proposals and adequate forms of politically managing these, and ensuring that negotiations on the organisation of international exchange systems are subject to the requirements of the former. These aspects of the problem will not be discussed here.

10.2 Land Access and Tenure Status

As the access to land depends on tenure status, the 'reforms' related to this are the subject for discussion here.

The language used in this area is often imprecise due to the lack of sufficient conceptualisation. In French the terms 'réformes foncières' (land reforms), 'réformes agraires' (agrarian reforms) and sometimes 'lois concernant le domaine national' (state land laws), 'transformations des modes d'exploitation' (transformation of farming methods) and in English the terms 'land tenure', 'land system' are often used interchangeably.

First of all, two types of 'tenure status' (or systems of land tenure) must be defined: those based on the private ownership of farm land and those that are not.

10.2.1 Land Tenure Based on the Private Ownership of the Land

In this case, the owner has, to use the terms of Roman law, usus (the right to use an asset), fructus (the right to appropriate the returns from the asset) and abusus (the right to transfer). This right is 'absolute' in the sense that the owner can farm his land himself, rent it out or even abstain from farming. The property may be given away or sold and it forms part of assets that can be inherited.

Certainly, this right is often less absolute than it appears. In all cases use is subject to public order laws (such as those prohibiting its unlawful use for the cultivation of stupefacients) and increasingly to environmental regulations. In some countries where an agrarian reform has been carried through, a limit has been established for the maximum surface area an individual or family can own (see below). The rights of tenant farmers (duration and guarantee of the lease, amount of land rent) limit those of the owners in varying degrees to the extent of affording the tenant farmer the major benefit of the protection of the state and its agricultural policies (this is the case in France). Freedom to choose his crops is not always the rule. In Egypt, from most remote time, the state agricultural services establish the proportion of land allotted to different crops depending on their irrigation requirements.

This system of land ownership is modern, inasmuch as it is the product of the constitution of ('really existing') historic capitalism which originated in western Europe (England) in the first place) and among the Europeans who colonised America. It was established through the destruction of the 'customary' systems for regulating access to land, even in Europe. The statutes of feudal Europe were based on the superposition of rights to the same land: those of the peasant concerned and other members of a village community (serfs or freemen), those of the feudal lord and those of the king. The assault on these rights took the form of 'enclosures' in England, imitated in different ways in all European countries during the course of the 19th century. Very early on, Marx denounced this radical transformation which excluded the majority of peasants from access to use of the land, turning them into proletariat emigrants to the towns (forced by circumstance) or, in the case of those who stayed into farm labourers or tenant farmers, which he regarded as numbering among the type of measures of primitive accumulation that dispossessed the producers of property or the use of the means of production.

The use of the terms of Roman law (usus and abusus) to describe the status of modern bourgeois ownership perhaps indicates that the latter had distant 'roots'. In this case, those of land ownership in the Roman Empire and more precisely those of pro-slavery latifundist ownership. The fact remains that as these particular forms of ownership have disappeared in feudal Europe, we cannot talk of the 'continuity' of a 'western' concept of ownership (itself associated with 'individualism' and of the values it represents) which has, in fact, never existed.

The rhetoric of capitalist discourse about itself–'liberal' ideology—has not only produced this myth of 'western continuity'. It has, above all, produced another even more dangerous myth, namely that of the 'absolute and superior rationale' of economic management based on the private and exclusive ownership of the means of production which it considers farmland to be. In fact, according to conventional economics, the 'market', that is to say the transferability of ownership of capital and land, determines the optimal (most efficient) use of these 'factors of production'. So, according to this principle, land becomes 'merchandise like any other', transferable at the 'market' price, in order to guarantee that the best use is made of it both for the owner concerned and society as a whole. This is nothing but mere tautology yet it is the one upon which all ('vulgar' which is to say acritical to use Marx's terms) bourgeois economic discourse is based. This same rhetoric is used to legitimise the principle of land ownership by dint of the fact that it alone can guarantee that the farmer who invests to improve his yield per hectare and the productivity of his work (and that of any employees) will not suddenly be dispossessed of the fruit of his labour and savings. This is not the case and other forms of regulating the right to use the land can produce similar results. In sum, this dominant discourse uses the conclusions that it sees fit to draw from the construction of western modernity in order to propose them as the only necessary 'rules' for the advancement of all other peoples. To make the land everywhere private property in the current sense of the term, as practiced in capitalist centres, is to spread the policy of 'enclosures' the world over, in other words, to hasten the dispossession of the peasants. This course of action is not new, it began and continued during

earlier centuries of the global expansion of capitalism in the context of colonial systems in particular. Today the World Trade Organisation (WTO) intends only to accelerate the process even though the destruction that would result from this capitalist approach is increasingly foreseeable and predictable. Resistance to this option by the peasants and peoples affected would make it possible to build a real and genuinely human alternative.

10.2.2 Land Tenure Systems not Based on the Private Ownership of the Land

As we can see, this definition is negative—*not* based on private property—and therefore cannot designate a homogeneous group since access to land is regulated in all human societies, however, it is regulated either by 'customary authorities', 'modern authorities', the state or more specifically, and more often, by a group of institutions and practices involving individuals, communities and the state.

'Customary' administration (expressed in terms of customary law or known as such) has always (or almost always) ruled out private property (in the modern sense) and always guaranteed access to land for all of the families (rather than the individuals) concerned. In other words, those that are part of a 'village community' which is distinct and can be identified as such. Yet it has (almost) always never guaranteed 'equal' right to land. In the first place, it most often excluded "foreigners" (usually the vestiges of conquered peoples), 'slaves' (of differing status) and shared land unequally depending on clan membership, lineage, caste or status ('chiefs', 'free men', etc.). So there is no reason to heap excessive praise upon these traditional rights as a number of anti-imperialist national ideologues unfortunately do. Progress will certainly require them to be challenged.

Customary administration has almost never been the system used in 'independent villages'. These have always been part of stable or changing, sound or precarious state groupings depending on circumstances but very rarely have they been absent. So the rights of use of the communities and families that made them up have always been limited by those of the state which levied taxes (which is why I described the vast family of pre-modern production methods as 'tributory').

These complex forms of 'customary'administration, which differ from one time and place to another, only persist, in the best of cases, in extremely deteriorated forms and have been under attack by the dominant rationale of world capitalism for at least two centuries (in Asia and in Africa), sometimes five (in Latin America).

In this respect, India is probably one of the clearest examples. Before British colonisation, access to land was managed by 'village communities', or more precisely by their upper ruling castes-classes, however, excluding lower castes, the Dalits, who were treated as a kind of collective slave class similar to the Hilotes of Sparta. These communities were, in turn, controlled and exploited by the imperial Mughal state and its vassals (Rajahs' and other ruler's states) which levied tribute.

The British raised the status of the zamindars, formerly land revenue collectors, to that of 'owners' who thus became large allied landowners in spite of tradition although they upheld 'tradition' when it suited them to do so, for example, by 'respecting' the exclusion of Dalits from access to land! Independent India has not challenged this serious colonial inheritance which is the cause of the incredible poverty of the majority of its peasantry and then after of its urban proletariat (cf S. Amin: *L'Inde, une grande puissance?* [*India, A Great Power?*] October 2004). The solution to these problems and the building of a viable economy for the peasant majority is therefore through an agrarian reform in the strictest sense of the term (see below the meaning of this proposal). The European colonisations of Southeast Asia and that of the United States in the Philippines resulted in similar developments. The 'enlightened despotic' regimes of the east (the Ottoman Empire, the Egypt of Mohamed Ali, the Shahs of Iran) also by and large established private ownership in the modern sense of the term to the benefit of a new class wrongly described as 'feudal' (by most historical Marxist thinking) recruited from among the senior ranks of their power system.

As a result of this, private ownership of the land has since then affected the majority of farm land, especially the best of it, throughout Asia outside China, Vietnam and the former Soviet republics of central Asia and there are only remnants of deteriorated para-customary systems in the poorest regions that are of the least value to the dominant capitalist farming in particular. This structure differs widely juxtaposing large landowners (country capitalists to use the terminology I proposed), rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants and the landless. There is no peasant 'organisation' or 'movement' that transcends these acute class conflicts.

In Arab Africa, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya, the colonisers (with the exception of Egypt) granted their colonists (or the Boers in South Africa) 'modern' private properties of a generally latifundist type. This legacy has certainly been brought to an end in Algeria but here the peasantry had almost disappeared, proletarised (and reduced to vagrancy) by the extension of colonial lands, whereas in Morocco and Tunisia the local bourgeoisie took them over (which was also the case to some extent in Kenya). In Zimbabwe, the revolution has challenged the legacy of colonialisation to the benefit, in part, of new middle owners of urban rather than rural origin and, in part, of 'poor peasants communities'. South Africa still remains outside this movement. The remnants of deteriorated para-customary systems that survive in the 'poor' regions of Morocco or Berber Algeria and the former Bantustans of South Africa are threatened with private appropriation from inside and outside the societies concerned. In all these situations, scrutiny of the peasant struggles (and possibly those of the organisations that support them) is required: are we talking about 'rich peasant' movements and demands in conflict with some orientation of state policy (and the influences of the dominant world system on them), or of poor and landless peasants? Can they form an 'alliance' against the dominant (so-called 'neo-liberal') system? Under what conditions? To what extent? Can the demands—expressed or otherwise—of poor and landless peasants be 'forgotten'?

In intertropical Africa, the apparent survival of 'customary' systems is certainly more visible because here the model of colonisation took a different and unique direction, known in French (the term has no translation in English) as 'economie de traite'. The administration of access to land was left to the so-called 'customary' authorities, however, controlled by the colonial state (through traditional clan leaders, legitimate or otherwise, created by the administration). The purpose of this control was to force peasants to produce a quota of specific products for export (peanuts, cotton, coffee, cocoa) over and above what they required for their own subsistence. Maintaining a system of land tenure that did not rely on private property suited colonisation since no land rent entered into composition of the prices of the designated products. This resulted in land being wasted, destroyed by the expansion of crops, sometimes permanently (as illustrated by the desertification of peanut producing areas of Senegal). Yet again capitalism showed that its 'short term rationale', an integral part of its dominant rationale, was in fact the cause of an ecological disaster. The combination of subsistence farming and the production of products for export also meant that the peasants were paid almost nothing for their work. To talk in these circumstances of a 'customary land tenure system' is going far too far. It is a new regime that preserves only the appearance of 'traditions' and often the least valuable of these.

China and Vietnam provide a unique example of a an access to land administration system that is based neither on private ownership or on 'customs' but on a new revolutionary right unknown elsewhere. It is the right of all peasants (defined as inhabitants of a village) to equal access to land and I stress the use of equal. This right is the finest accomplishment of the Chinese and Vietnamese revolutions.

In China, and even more so in Vietnam which was more extensively colonised, 'former' land tenure systems (those that I have described as 'tributory') were already quite eroded by dominant capitalism. The former ruling classes of the imperial power system had turned most of the agricultural land into private or quasi-private property whereas the development of capitalism encouraged the formation of new rich peasant classes. Mao Zedong is the first and without doubt the only one, followed by the Chinese and Vietnamese communists, to have defined a revolutionary agrarian strategy based on the mobilisation of the majority of poor, landless and middle peasants. From the outset, the triumph of this revolution made it possible to abolish the private ownership of land, which was replaced by that of the state, and organise new forms of equal access to land for all peasants. This organisation has certainly passed through several successive phases including that inspired by the Soviet model based on production cooperatives. The limited achievements made by the latter have led both countries to return to peasant family farming. Is this model viable? Can it lead to a sustained improvement in production without bringing about an excess of rural manpower? Under what conditions? What supporting policies does it require of the state? What types of political management can meet the challenge?

Ideally, the model involves the dual affirmation of the rights of the state (sole owner) and of the usufructuary (the peasant family). It guarantees equal distribution of the village land among all of the families. It prohibits any use of it, such as

renting, other than for family farming. It guarantees that the proceeds of investments made by the usufructuary return to him in the short term through his right of ownership of all farm produce (which is freely marketed, although the state guarantees a minimum price), and in the long term by inheritance of usufruct to the exclusive benefit of children remaining on the farm (any person who emigrates from the village loses his right of access to the land which is then redistributed). As this involves rich land but also small (even tiny) farms, the system is only viable as long as the vertical investment (the green revolution with no large scale industrialisation) is equally efficient to allow the increase of production per rural worker as is horizontal investment (the expansion of farming supported by increased industrialisation).

Has this 'ideal' model ever been implemented? Certainly close to it (for example during the time of Deng Xiaoping in China). However, the fact remains that although this model ensures a high degree of equality within the village, it has never been able to overcome the inequalities between one community and another that are a function of the quality of the land, the density of the population and the proximity of urban markets. Furthermore, no redistribution system has not been up to the challenge (even through the structures of cooperatives and state trade monopolies of the 'Soviet' phase).

Certainly more serious is the fact that the system is itself subject to internal and external pressures which undermine its direction and social scale. Access to credit, satisfactory subsidisation are subject to bargaining and interventions of all kinds, legitimate or otherwise. 'Equal' access to land is not synonymous with 'equal' access to the best production conditions. The popularisation of 'market' ideology contributes to this destabilization. The system tolerates (and has even re-legitimised) farm tenancy and the employment of waged employees. Right wing discourse—encouraged from abroad—stresses the need to give the peasants in question 'ownership' of the land and to open up the 'farmland market'. It is quite clear that rich peasants (and even agribusiness) seeking to increase their property are behind this discourse.

This system of peasant access to land has been administered thus far by the state and the party which are one. Clearly, one might have thought that it could have been administered by genuine elected village councils. This is certainly necessary as there is hardly any other means of winning the support of the majority and reducing the intrigues of the minority would-be beneficiaries of a more markedly capitalist approach. The 'party dictatorship' has shown itself to be largely inclined to careerism, opportunism and even corruption. Social struggles are currently far from non-existent in rural China and Vietnam. They are no less strongly expressed than elsewhere in the world but they are by and large "defensive" and concerned with defending the legacy of the revolution—equal right to land for all. This legacy must be defended, especially as it is under greater threat than it may appear despite repeated affirmations from both governments that the 'state ownership of the land will never be abolished in favour of private property'! Yet today this defence demands recognition of the right to do so through the organisation of those who are affected, that is to say, the peasants.

10.3 Forms of Organisation of Agricultural Production and Land Tenure

The forms of organisation of agricultural production and land tenure are too varied in Asia and Africa for one single formula of 'alternative peasant social construction' to be recommended for all.

By 'agrarian reform' we must understand the redistribution of private property when it is deemed too unequally divided. It is not a matter of 'reforming the land tenure status' since we are dealing with a land tenure system governed by the principle of ownership. This reform, however, seeks to meet the perfectly legitimate demand of poor and landless peasants and to reduce the political and social power of large landowners. Yet, where it has been implemented, in Asia and Africa after the liberation from former forms of imperialist and colonial domination, this has been done by non-revolutionary hegemonic social blocks in the sense that they were not directed by the dominated poor classes in the majority, except in China and Vietnam, where, in fact, for this reason there has been no 'agrarian reform' in the strict sense of the term but, as I have already said, suppression of the private ownership of land, affirmation of state ownership and implementation of the principle of 'equal' access to the use of the land by all peasants. Elsewhere real reforms dispossessed the only large owners to the eventual benefit of middle and even rich peasants (in the longer term), ignoring the interests of the poor and landless. This has been the case in Egypt and other Arab countries. The reform under way in Zimbabwe may face a similar perspective. In other situations such as in India, South East Asia, South Africa and Kenya, reform is still on the agenda of what is needed.

Even where agrarian reform is an immediate unavoidable demand, its long term success is uncertain as it reinforces an attachment to 'small ownership' which becomes an obstacle to challenging the land tenure system based on private ownership.

Russian history illustrates this tragic situation. The evolution begun after the abolition of serfdom (in 1861), accelerated by the revolution of 1905 then the policies of Stolypine, had already produced a 'demand for ownership' that the revolution of 1917 had consecrated by means of a radical agrarian reform and, as we know, the new small owners were not happy about giving up their rights to the benefit of the unfortunate cooperatives created at the time in the 1930s. A 'different approach' based on peasant family economy and generalised small ownership might have been possible but it was not tried.

Yet what about the regions (other than China and Vietnam) in which the land tenure system is not (yet) based on private property? We are, of course, talking about inter-tropical Africa.

We return here to an old debate. In the late 19th century, Marx, in his correspondence with the Russian Narodniks (Vera Zassoulitch among others), dares to state that the absence of private property may be a major advantage for the socialist revolution by allowing the transition from a system of the administration

of access to land other than that governed by private ownership but he does not say what forms this new system should take and the use of 'collective', however fair, remains insufficient. Twenty years later, Lenin claimed that this possibility no longer existed and had been destroyed by the penetration of capitalism and the spirit of private ownership that accompanied it. Was this judgment right or wrong? I cannot say on this matter as it goes beyond my knowledge of Russia. However, the fact remains that Lenin did not consider this matter of crucial importance, having accepted Kautsky's point of view regarding the *Agrarian Question*. Kautsky generalised the scope of the modern European capitalist model and felt that the peasantry was destined to 'disappear' due to the expansion of capitalism itself. In other words, capitalism would have been capable of 'resolving the agrarian question'. Although 80 % true for the capitalist centers (the Triad: 15 % of the world's population), this proposition does not hold true for the 'rest of the world' (85 % of its population!). History shows not only that capitalism has not resolved this question for 85 % of the people but that from the perspective of its continued expansion, it can resolve it no longer (other than by genocide! A fine solution!). So it fell to Mao Zedong and the Communist Parties of China and Vietnam to find a suitable solution to the challenge.

The question resurfaced during the 1960s with African independence. The national liberation movements of the continent, the states and party-states that arose from them enjoyed, in varying degrees, the support of the peasant majority of their peoples. Their natural propensity to populism led them to conceive of a 'specific ('African') socialist approach'. The latter could certainly be described as very moderately radical in its relationship both with dominant imperialism and the local classes associated with its expansion. It did not raise the question of rebuilding of peasant society in a humanist and universalist spirit to any lesser extent. A spirit that often proved highly critical of the 'traditions' that the foreign masters had in fact tried to use to their profit.

All—or almost all—African countries adopted the same principle, formulated as an 'inalienable right of state ownership' of all land. I do not believe this proclamation to have been a 'mistake', nor do I think that it was motivated by extreme 'statism'.

Examination of the way that the current peasant system really operates and its integration into the capitalist world economy reveals the scale of the challenge. This management is provided by a complex system that is based both on 'custom', private ownership (capitalist) and the rights of the state. The 'custom' in question has degenerated and barely serves to disguise the discourse of bloodthirsty dictators who pay lip service to 'authenticity' which is nothing but a fig leaf that they think hides their thirst for pillage and treachery in the face of imperialism. The only major obstacle to the expansionist tendency of private ownership is the possible resistance of its victims. In some regions that are better able to yield rich crops (irrigated areas and market garden farms) land is bought, sold and rented with no formal land title.

Inalienable state property, which I defend in principle, itself becomes a vehicle for private ownership. Thus, the state can 'provide' the land necessary for the

development of a tourist area, a local or foreign agribusiness or even a state farm. The land titles necessary for access to improved areas are distributed in a way that is rarely transparent. In all cases the peasant families who inhabited the areas and are asked to leave are victims of these practices which are an abuse of power. Still, the 'abolition' of inalienable state property in order to transfer it to the occupiers is not feasible in reality (all village lands would have to be registered with the land registry!) and if this were attempted it would only allow rural and urban notables to help themselves to the best plots.

The right answer to the challenges of the management of a land tenure system not based on private ownership (as the main system at least) is through state reform and its active involvement in the implementation of a modernised and economically viable and democratic system for administering access to land that rules out, or at least minimises, inequality. The solution certainly does not lie in a 'return to customs', which would, in fact, be impossible, and would only serve to accentuate inequalities and open the way for savage capitalism.

We cannot say that no African state has ever tried the approach recommended here.

In Mali following independence in September 1961, the Sudanese Union began what has very wrongly been described as 'collectivisation'. In fact, the cooperatives that were set up were not productive cooperatives, production remained the exclusive responsibility of family farms. It was a form of modernised collective authority that replaced the so-called "custom" on which colonial authority had depended. The party that took over this new modern power was clearly aware of the challenge and set the objective of abolishing customary forms of power that were deemed to be 'reactionary' even 'feudal'. It is true that this new peasant authority which was formally democratic (those in charge were elected) was in actual fact only as democratic as the state and the party. However, it had 'modern' responsibilities, namely, to ensure that access to land was administered 'correctly', that is to say, without 'discrimination', to manage loans, the distribution of subsidies (supplied by state trade) and product marketing (also partly the responsibility of state trade). In practice, nepotism and extortion have certainly never been stamped out. The only response to these abuses should have been the progressive democratisation of the state and not its 'retreat' as liberalism then imposed (by means of an extremely violent military dictatorship) to the benefit of the traders ('dioulas').

Other experiences in the liberated areas of Guinea Bissau (impelled by theories put forward by Amilcar Cabral) in Burkina Faso at the time of Sankara have also tackled these challenges head on and sometimes produced unquestionable progress that today people try to erase. The creation of elected rural collectives in Senegal is a response whose principle I would not hesitate to defend. Democracy is a never ending process, no more so in Europe than in Africa.

What current dominant discourse understands by 'reform of the land tenure system' is quite the opposite from what the construction of a real alternative based on a prosperous peasant economy requires. This discourse, promoted by the propaganda instruments of collective imperialism—the World Bank, numerous

cooperation agencies and also a number of NGOs with considerable financial backing—understands land reform to mean the acceleration of the privatisation of land and nothing more. The aim is clear: create the conditions that would allow 'modern' islands of (foreign or local) agribusiness to take possession of the land they need in order to expand. Yet the additional produce that these islands could provide (for export or creditworthy local market) will never meet the challenge of the requirements of creation of a prosperous society for all which implies the advancement of the peasant family economy as a whole.

10.4 Alternative Land Tenure

So, counter to this, a land tenure reform conceived from the perspective of the creation of a real, efficient and democratic alternative supported by prosperous peasant family production must define the role of the state (principal inalienable owner) and that of the institutions and mechanisms of administering access to land and the means of production.

I do not exclude here complex mixed formulas that are specific to each country. Private ownership of the land may be acceptable—at least where it is established and held to be legitimate. Its redistribution can or should be reviewed, where necessary, as part of an agrarian reform (South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya, with respect to Sub-Saharan Africa). I would not even necessarily rule out the controlled clearance of land for agribusiness in all cases. The key lies elsewhere, in the modernisation of peasant family farming and the democratisation of the management of its integration into the national and global economy.

I have no blue print to propose for these areas so I will limit myself to pointing out some of the great problems that this reform poses.

The democratic question is indisputably central to the response to the challenge. It is a complex and difficult question that cannot be reduced to insipid discourse about good governance and electoral pluralism. There is an indisputably cultural aspect to the question: democracy leads to the abolition of 'customs' that are hostile to it (prejudice concerning social hierarchies and above all the treatment of women). There are legal and institutional aspects to be considered: the creation of systems of administrative, commercial and personal rights that are consistent with the aims of the plans for social construction and the creation of suitable (generally elected) institutions. However, above all, the progress of democracy will depend definitively on the social power of its defenders. The organization of peasant movements is, in this respect, absolutely irreplaceable. It is only to the extent that peasants are able to express themselves that progress in the direction known as 'participative democracy' (as opposed to the reduction of the problem to the dimension of 'representative democracy') will be able to make headway.

The question of relations between men and women is another aspect of the democratic challenge that is no less essential. Peasant 'family farming' obviously concerns the family, which is to this day characterised almost everywhere by

structures that require the submission of women and the exploitation of their work force. Democratic transformation will not be possible in these conditions without the organised action of the women concerned.

Attention must be given to the question of migration. In general, 'customary' rights exclude 'foreigners' (that is to say, all those who do not belong to the clans, lineage and families that make up the village community in question) from the right to land or place conditions upon their access to it. Migration resulting from colonial and post colonial development have sometimes been of a such a scale that they have overturned the concepts of ethnic 'homogeneity' in the regions affected by this development. Emigrants from outside the state in question (such as the Burkina Be in Ivory Coast) or those who although formally citizens of the same state are of an 'ethnic' origin other than that of the regions they have made their homes (like the Hausa in the Nigerian state of Plateau), see their rights to the land that they have cultivated challenged by short-sighted and chauvinistic political movements who also benefit form foreign support. To throw the 'communitarism' in question into ideological and political disarray and uncompromisingly denounce the paracultural discourse that underpins it has become one of the indispensable conditions of real democratic progress.

The analyses and propositions set out above only concern the status of tenure or rules on access to land. These matters are certainly central to debates on the future of agricultural and food production, peasant societies and the people that make them up yet they do not cover all aspects of the challenge. Access to land remains devoid of the potential to transform society if the peasant who benefits from it cannot have access to the essential means of production in suitable conditions (credit, seed, subsidies, access to markets). Both national policies and international negotiations that aim to define the context in which prices and revenues are determined are other aspects of the peasant question.

Further information on these questions that go beyond the scope of the subject we are dealing with here can be found in the writings of Jacques Berthelot—the best critical analyst of projects to integrate agricultural and food production into 'world' markets. So we shall restrict ourselves to mentioning the two main conclusions and proposals reached:

10.4.1 Agricultural and Food Production, and Land: No Ordinary 'Merchandise'

We cannot allow agricultural and food production, and land to be treated as ordinary 'merchandise' and then agree to the need to integrate them into plans for global liberalisation promoted by the dominant powers (the United States and Europe) and transnationalised capital.

The agenda of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which inherited the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1995, must quite simply be refused. Opinion in Asia and Africa, beginning with peasant organisations but also all the

social and political forces that defend the interests of popular classes and those of the nation (and demands for food sovereignty in particular), all those who have not given up on a development project worthy of the name, must be persuaded that negotiations entered into as part of the WTO agenda can only result in catastrophe for the peoples of Asia and Africa and simply threaten to devastate the lives of more than two and a half billion peasants from the two continents while offering them no other prospect than migration to slums, being shut away in 'concentration camps' the construction of which is already planned for the unfortunate future emigrants.

Capitalism has reached a stage where its continued expansion requires the implementation of 'enclosure' policies on a world scale like the 'enclosures' of the beginning of its development in England except that today the destruction on a world scale of the 'peasant reserves' of cheap labour will be nothing less than synonymous with the genocide of half of humanity. On one hand the destruction of the peasant societies of Asia and Africa. On the other, some billions in extra profit for world capital and its local associates derived from a socially useless production since it is not destined to cover the unsolvable needs of hundreds of millions of extra hungry but only to increase the number of obese in the north and those who emulate them in the south!

So Asian and African states must quite simply be called upon to withdraw from these negotiations and therefore reject decisions taken by the imperialist United States and Europe within the famous 'Green Rooms' of the WTO. This voice must be made to be heard and the governments concerned must be forced to ensure that it is heard in the WTO.

10.4.2 Northern Double Standards Towards People of the South

We can no longer accept the behaviour of the major imperialist powers that together assault the people of the South (the United States and Europe) within the WTO. It must be pointed out that the same powers that try to impose their 'liberalist' proposals unilaterally upon the countries of the South do not abide by these proposals themselves and behave in a way that can only be described as systematic cheating.

The Farm Bill in the United States and the agricultural policy of the European Union violate the very principles that the WTO is trying to impose on others. The 'partnership' projects proposed by the European Union following the Cotonou Convention as of 2008 are really 'criminal' to use the strong but fair expression of Jacques Berthelot.

So we can and must hold these powers to account through the authorities of the WTO set up for this purpose. A group of countries from the South not only could but must do it.

Asian and African peasants organised themselves in the previous period of their peoples' liberation struggles. They found their place in powerful historical blocks which enabled them to be victorious over the imperialism of the time. These blocks

were sometimes revolutionary (China and Vietnam) and found their main support in rural areas among the majority classes of middle, poor and landless peasants. When, elsewhere, they were led by the national bourgeoisie, or those among the rich and middle peasants who aspired to becoming bourgeois, large landowners and 'customary' local authorities in the pay of colonisation were isolated.

Having turned over a new leaf, the challenge of the new collective imperialism of the triad (United States, Europe, Japan) will only be lifted if historical blocks form in Asia and Africa that cannot be a remake of the former ones. The definition of the nature of these blocks, their strategies and their immediate and longer term objectives in these new circumstances is the challenge facing the alter-globalist movement and its constituent parts of social forums. A far more serious challenge than a large number of movements engaged in current struggles imagine.

New peasant organisations exist in Asia and Africa that support the current visible struggles. Often, when political systems make it impossible for formal organisations to form, social struggles for the campaign take the form of 'movements' with no apparent direction. Where they do exist, these actions and programmes must be more closely examined. What peasant social forces do they represent, whose interests they defend? The majority mass of peasants or the minorities that aspire to find their place in the expansion of dominant global capitalism?

We should be wary of over hasty replies to these complex and difficult questions. We should not 'condemn' many organisations and movements under the pretext that they do not have the support of the majority of peasants for their radical programmes. That would be to ignore the demands of the formation of large alliances and strategies in stages. Neither should we subscribe to the discourse of 'naive alter-globalism' that often sets the tone of forums and fuels the illusion that the world would be set on the right track only by the existence of social movements. A discourse, it is true, that is more one of numerous NGOs—well-meaning perhaps—than of peasant and worker organisations [November 2004].

Note

The analysis and proposals made in this chapter are only relevant for Asia and Africa. The agrarian question in Latin America and the Caribbean have their own particular and sometimes unique particularities. Thus, in the Southern Cone of the continent (southern Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile), modernised, mechanised latifundism that benefits from cheap labour is the method of farming that is best adapted to the demands of a liberal global capitalist system that is even more competitive than the agriculture in the United States and Europe.

Further Reading

Reference to peasant struggles in Asia and Africa (China, India, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Ethiopia, Western Africa, South Africa and Zimbabwe) can be found in: S. Amin et al.: *Les luttes paysannes et ouvrières face aux défis du XXIe siècle (Peasant and Worker Struggles and the Challenges of the 21st Century)*, Les Indes Savantes (Paris 2004). Translations into English, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese.

See Also

India, a Great Power?, in: Samir Amin*, Beyond US hegemony* (London: Zed, 2006).

Cf work by Jacques Berthelot on negotiations and proposals for agricultural integration into liberal globalisation: J. Berthelot, *L'agriculture, talon d'Achille de l'OMC* [Agriculture, the Achilles Heel of the WTO].

(TWF site): *en Afrique de l'Ouest ?* [What Future for the Peasant Societies of Western Africa?]

M. Mazoyer and J. Roudard: *Histoire des agricultures du monde* [History of World Agriculture]

See our proposals for the integration of peasants' rights to access to land in the charter of universal rights at:<forumtiersmonde.net>; section "Current Programmes" the new Agrarian Question

Chapter 11
Transnational Capitalism

11.1 Is Transnational Capitalism in the Process of Emerging?

Over the last 30 years the concept of the globalisation of capitalism has been the focus of great debate. For those, like Wallerstein, Arrighi, Franck and me, who have long argued that historical capitalism has always been globalised, at each stage of its development the sole question to ask is whether the latest stage of globalisation presents us with important new characteristics that constitute a qualitative change in the nature of capitalism.[1]

A resounding 'yes' can be heard from the majority of economists and conventional political scientists, for whom the relevance of the nation-state, which would have characterised the historical capitalism of the past, is gradually being diminished by the rapid development of 'transnationalisation'. For them, the connotations of the latest stage of globalisation scarcely warrant clarification, as they are somewhat obvious.

Far more interesting are the responses of those economists who are critical of capitalism. They too give a positive response to the question. However, by basing their arguments on fact they manage to steer away from detailed conclusions regarding the nature of the transformation of capitalism.

To my knowledge, since 1970 Stephen Hymer is the first person to have formulated this positive response (to a question which was far less frequently asked at that time) by stating that 'an internationalist capitalist class is emerging whose interests lie in the world economy' (William K. Carroll: '*The Making of a Transnational Capitalist Class*?, Zed, 2010: 2).

Kees Van Der Pijl ('The Making of an Atlantic Ruling Class', 1984) has always integrated his analysis of transformations within the global economic system with those of the wider global political economy, putting all of his emphasis on

[1] This text was translated from the French by Mairi Lockwood first published by *Pambazuka News,* 23 March 2011 (website). The copyright for this text belongs to the author.

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the political dimension, as should be expected. He was amongst the first to have proclaimed (and rightly so, in my opinion) that the 'European project' was actually born in Washington; 'European unification was a product of US intervention' (Carroll 2010: 155).

However, more recent steps towards acknowledging the emergence of an 'Atlantic trans-national capitalism' that comprises the United States and north-west Europe have been proposed by Leslie Sklair (*The Transnational Capitalist Class*, Blackwell, 2001), W.I. Robinson (*A Theory of Global Capitalism*, John Hopkins, Baltimore, 2004) and Carroll 2010.

Robinson has gone the furthest in terms of defining the qualitative transformation of capitalism by defining the new bourgeoisie as the "group that owns leading worldwide means of production" (Carroll 2010: 3).

Leslie Sklair defines the new transnational capitalism by combining the different dimensions of his latest investigation into one reality. The global leading class is therefore made up of the following: 'corporate executives'; market majority-holders and the politicians at their disposal ('globalizing bureaucrats and politicians'); the technocrats also at their disposal ('globalising professionals'); and even the most privileged classes who benefit from globalisation ('consumerist elites'). The existence of such an association, for Sklair, is hardly worth mentioning. Yet, can we assume that this constitutes a single global class? Or is it a group of associated classes that delineate a globally dominant historic bloc (à la Gramsci)? Or could it be a group of classes (of differing nationalities amongst other things) who are conscious of their shared interests yet are still in competition with each other? The latter response is that of Pijl and it is a view that I share, the reasons for which I will come to later.

The most recent work on the question of the globalisation of capitalism that of Carroll (2010), is an empirical study of titanic proportions. Carroll has created an indicator for measuring the interpenetration of capital at both national and transnational levels, in Europe, the North Atlantic and worldwide. This indicator is made up of the number of firms whose directorates are subject to cross-representation. Carroll has therefore recorded each of the instances of exchanged representation for the group of 100, or in this case the 500 largest corporations in the world. The end product of Carroll's investigation is a system of ranking which ascertains to what degree the interpenetration of capital occurs; this piece of work is, to my knowledge, unparalleled in its precision and magnificent illustrations; his series of graphs (which turn black with higher levels of interpenetration and grey or even white when interpenetration is less frequent) make for an enlightening set of results.

I don't take issue with the more immediate conclusions that Carroll reaches in this investigation, but I will return later to his less immediate conclusions of which I am not convinced. Carroll's immediate conclusions are as follows:

1. Transnational interpenetration has not diminished the strength of national systems; 'the transnationalisation of the corporate network has not fragmented national corporate networks' (p. 24), or a 'transnational network is a kind of superstructure that rests upon rather resilient national bases' (p. 34).

2. Links between corporations are strengthened, with this initially taking place at the national level (even in Europe). Germany has the most well-integrated national system in comparison with other European countries; following that is north-western Europe (Germany, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden and Great Britain, who altogether occupy a single position within this network of links); and finally the Atlantic (made up of Europe as set out above, and the United States and Canada). In contrast however, Japan–Europe and Japan–North America links are somewhat stunted. Worse still are the links between the central Atlantic on one side and the rest of the world on the other side (including developing countries, China and others).
3. The European network excludes practically the whole of eastern Europe and the Balkans; and is entirely centred upon the advanced capitalist countries of occidental Europe.
4. The European and Atlantic integrated networks are principally made up of commercial and industrial corporations, with banking corporations featuring very marginally. The banks are strongly linked to certain areas within the national system of production, but are not linked to each other directly. As such, banks remain broadly 'national' in comparison with other corporations; they are not generally considered as European or Atlantic entities.
5. Western European integration (not simply European, as eastern and southern European countries are typically excluded) is well ahead in comparison with other models of transnational integration.

From his observations, Carroll arrives at two major conclusions:

1. The western European construction is fully working. I will return to this point, which has been formulated far too hastily in my opinion, and risks instilling an erroneous perspective on the situation.
2. National foundations are still important. Carroll illustrates his conclusion using the following points: 'the notion that the elite is becoming disembodied from national moorings and repositioned in a supra national space underestimates the persistence of national and regional attachments' (p. 129).

I feel that the term 'underestimates' is in itself too ambiguous to accurately reflect the reality of the connection between the national and the transnational in both occidental Europe and in the Atlantic.

11.2 National Capitalisms and Collective Imperialism

Capitalism cannot simply be reduced to a sum of capitalist companies in existence. Conventional economics places emphasis on the functions of markets while abandoning the global political economy, and in doing so, systematically distorts reality, only providing a misleading picture that is ultimately incorrect.

Capitalism is an historic and a social reality (and not only economic) that ought to be studied by examining a collection of capitalist societies (rather than

a collection of capitalist economies, and especially not a collection of capitalist firms). I believe that capitalist societies are national societies and of this I am very insistent. They always have been and they always will be, in spite of transnationalisation, which as it happens has always accompanied the global distribution of dominant national actors.

When analysing these national capitalisms, today, as in the past, the emphasis within research should not neglect to examine the realities presented to us by capitalist corporations. However, the research must go much deeper than that and examine: (1) the nature of social formations; (2) how the bourgeoisie (the dominant capitalist class) corresponds with these social formations; and (3) the role of the state responsible for organising the political set-up of these social formations.

I have always claimed—and I stand by this position—that the social formations of central capitalism create autocentric and integrated production systems, even if they are internationally open, or even aggressively open. The concept of an autocentric system is in itself rather complex and links together several different elements: (1) technical interdependence between the various branches of production (as shown on input–output tables); (2) methods for managing the conflicting relationship between capital and labour; (3) links relating the dominant monopolies to the other branches of production submitted to the first and integrated within the reproduction of capital (since the end of the twentieth century), or integrated within capitalism; (4) methods for managing money as a means for putting overall capital interests before the conflicting interests of the individual capitalist; and (5) the nature of the (aggressive) opening of the economy to globalisation and the methods for managing the asymmetric transnationalisation which accompanies it.

Clearly this type of holistic analysis—specific to the political economy (I prefer to say 'specific to historical materialism')—does not give us a one-size-fits-all explanation. We must further analyse history and any transformational developments from one stage to the next.

From this point of view the indicator chosen by Carroll to represent the exchanged representations between boards of directors is incapable of providing answers for any of the questions if it is taken alone. It does not allow us to say that emerging transnational capitalism replaces national capitalism—or that it submits them to its logic—nor does it permit us to believe the contrary—that national capitalisms are determinant in the shaping of transnationalisation. It doesn't explain whether a 'transnational capitalist class' is emerging or not.

There can be no question here of developing the empirical arguments (the emphasis being on 'empirical') that we would need to collate and analyse in order to advance with answering the six questions put forward just now. A great deal of what I have written over the course of the last 50 years has gone towards my modest contribution to responding to these questions. However, this type of contribution is sadly becoming more and more rare, the repercussions of placing the 'markets' at the centre of our focus being fatal for a realist analysis and critique of capitalism.

Sklair is aware of the impossibility of drawing a conclusion on the emergence of a 'post-national' capitalism. He writes, 'we should speak of a transnational capitalist class only if there are structural conditions that reproduces a transnational

corporate community independent of its national home base' (Carroll: 19). And yet these 'structural conditions' are far from being reunited, notwithstanding transnationalisation, which has had the wind in its sails for 30 years.

In 1993, UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) proposed methods for measuring this transnationalisation by creating the simple and practically self-explanatory 'transnationality index' (TNI). This index links together three related elements: the number of foreign workers contributing to a firm's total workers; the total volume of exports in comparison to a firm's overall trade; and the amount of work that is sub-contracted externally compared with the total amount of work available. Between 1996 and 2006 the TNI rises visibly (cited by Carroll: ibid: 91). Yet is this rise simply a conjectural change or does it reflect a decisive and irreversible transformation? And if the latter is indeed the case, is transnationalisation strengthening itself? Or is it actually serving to strengthen the dominant national capitalisms that it is shaped by? Unsurprisingly, simply measuring transnationalisation alone cannot provide an adequate answer to these questions.

Beyond the narrow conclusions we can draw from Carroll's recordings of the cross-representation between boards of directors, he does make important observations:

1. The economies of the global South, including emerging countries (even the most successful among them, China) have been marginalised thanks to the intensifying transnational interdependence of the global North. Carroll goes so far as to say, 'the network seemed to present one facet of a collective imperialism, organised to help manage global capitalism' (ibid, p. 55). I note here the return to my thesis concerning the emergence of collective imperialism, a term more appropriate in my opinion, than the extremely vague 'globalisation'.
2. Transnationalisation only truly holds the interest of the economies within the North Atlantic (US, occidental Europe), whereas Japan seems only to participate very marginally in this process.

The first of these observations provokes debate as to what I perceive the collective imperialism of the triad (US, Western Europe and Japan) to be.

Globalisation is an inappropriate term. Its popularity is commensurate with the violence of ideological aggression that has prohibited henceforth the utterance of 'imperialism'. For me, the deployment of true historical capitalism has always been globalised and has always been polarised and to this end, imperialist. Thus, collective imperialism is simply an old and enduring phenomenon in a new guise.

This new form of imperialism is clearly built upon objective foundations and its character is determined by the strong transnationalisation of the leading corporations. It implies a rallying towards a common political project: working together to manage the downtrodden world (global South), and to this end, placing it safely under the military control of the US armed forces and their subaltern allies within the triad (NATO, Japan). Yet this new demand does not wipe out the national character of the capitalist components within the triad. It does reduce the contradictions and conflicts but it does not wipe them out completely. Carroll outlines the

uncertainties associated with the permanence of these conflicts. He writes, 'the wave of the international mergers did not lead to stable transnational firms' (ibid: 18).

The analysis of political convergences within the triad and the conflicts that accompanies them are outside Carroll's field of vision. I have placed it back at the centre of my analysis of the current long and systematic crisis of widespread monopoly capitalisms (I refer here to my book entitled *Ending the Crisis of Capitalism or Ending Capitalism*?, 2010).

The national partners within the triad (and I am insistent on this point, even with respect to Europe) are quite clearly unequal.

Debates surrounding hegemony—in the Gramscian sense—and particularly the declining hegemon that is the United States, are important here. Carroll's analysis cannot simply be constrained to looking at competitive inequalities of the production systems in concern (United States, Great Britain, Germany, Japan and France etc.). It must include political, ideological and military dimensions as well.

Debates regarding the spread of financialisation and its effects are equally important. Again I refer the reader to my work on 'The Crisis'. Financialisation is in my estimation not a product of 'error', nor is it the product of 'ramblings'; it demonstrates how what I call generalised monopolies must manage capital during the crisis. Nevertheless, this financialisation does conflict with the requirements for finance-management at the national level (even in Europe with the euro, as I will explain later on). Carroll's observation that banks are far less transnational than production companies is testament to this contradiction, reminding us of the autonomy of national systems despite the flow of transnationalisation.

Nevertheless, transnationalisation clearly weakens the coherence of the national production systems concerned, even those of the most powerful partners. Yet it does not substitute the emergence of a coherent transnational production system (not even a trans-European one) to which national systems are forced to submit themselves to. To this end, the global system is instable and will become increasingly so, as remarked in passing by Carroll.

Japan's position within the triad seems somewhat marginal if we are to believe Carroll's deductions. I think that there is an error of judgment here and that Carroll's choice of indicator (the cross exchanges between boards of directors) distorts reality. Japanese capitalism has never been particularly transparent and its main concern, and it is well known, is to remain its own master, even if more for show than anything else. Despite this, in other ways (including of course, political and military plans), Japan's membership in the triad of collective imperialism is in no doubt, in my mind.

Generally the frontiers of this triad seem to me to be clearly demarcated. I will return later to the boundaries within Europe. But what of Canada or Australia? These two national capitalisms are—for reasons I am unable to develop upon here—what I would label 'exterior provinces' of the United States. Japan is in a similar position in its own way, but Mexico, to which I will return later, is not.

Due to the reasons laid out above, major conflict within the global system is divisive and in the foreseeable future it will inevitably continue to divide the 'North' (the imperialist triad) and the 'South' (in particular China and other emerging countries).

11.3 One Europe or Many Europes: Under Construction or Deconstruction?

Add together Europe's entire working-class population and its entire GDP (gross domestic product) and you will see that it is the most powerful economy in the world. We are told that even if the European project were thought up in Washington at the beginning, it was soon to become a working reality, allowing Europe to be on equal footing with the United States and to assert itself as having the gravitational pull within the world system.

This argument is not logical, simply because the nation-states associated with the European Union (EU) continue to be founded on national capitalisms which when put together are more competitive than they are complementary, or at least, are only complementary in unequal terms; that is to say, only if the weakest players submit to whatever is dictated by the strongest player. The EU is not therefore a stable ensemble like that of the United States, who, in spite of its federal constitution is one nation and one state.

The European Constitution does not allow the EU to go beyond its current set-up; it is not possible to move towards a 'confederal' and multinational 'European state'. This set-up has done nothing more than ratify the desiderata of the national capitalist monopolies. Apeldoor was right in 2002 when he said that the European Round Table of Industrialists had practically drafted the constitution without consulting any elected bodies (Carroll, ibid: 155).

And yet the strategies employed by European monopoly-holders lean on a consensus with only one objective: to make it impossible for the elected authorities to question the exclusive domination of said monopoly-holders (as Giscard d'Estaing confessed 'to make socialism an illegal objective'). The consensus thereby halts the progression towards a transnational state, if it were possible, despite the diversity of national European bodies.

The euro crisis has shattered this reality and brought to light the irregularities that characterise the European construction. Amongst the reasons I gave for 'the impossible management of the euro', I emphasised Germany's objective to 'dominate Europe'. Just as our Greek friends I mentioned in my analysis may recall, Germany's objective is to achieve through economic means what they failed to achieve twice through military conquests: a 'German Europe'.

11.4 Europe is Still Conjugated in the Plural

The 'first Europe' consists of the historic core of the most powerful national capitalisms (Germany, France and Great Britain, to which we can add the more modest states that are no less advanced such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and Sweden), and despite appearances it is still subject to potentially violent conflicts. The pairing of France and Germany only works as long as the weaker

of the two—France—aligns itself with the interests of the stronger of the two—Germany. This is the case whilst Sarkozy is in power; however, in future this may change. Great Britain stands alone, seeking to balance itself between satisfying its new 'European' interests and satisfying its North Atlantic preferences. The 'second Europe' consists of the more fragile national capitalisms such as Italy, Spain and possibly even some others (Ireland, Portugal and Greece). This Europe does not have a say in anything. It is obliged to conform to the decisions made by the more powerful, by Germany above all.

The 'third Europe'—the ex-Central and Eastern Europe Countries (CEE)—constitute the dominated periphery. Its relationship with the first Europe, particularly with Germany, is similar in nature to that of Latin America and the United States. Eastern Europe and the Balkans serve as the field of expansion for the domination of the monopoly-holders coming from the major European powers; it is nothing more than this, even if there is the strong illusion that that their peoples are in the process of 'catching-up' through European integration.

A parallel between the ex-CEE countries and Mexico is drawn here. By adhering to the NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) Mexico has renounced its independence. In spite of appearances—good GDP growth, although this is highly debatable—Mexico is not en route to a course of development that would permit it to climb the ladder in order to leave behind its 'semi-peripheral' position: history shows that the surrendering of the Mexican nation will be difficult to overcome, as will the situations of Eastern European nations. A disaster similar to that which cost Mexico half its territory after it was annexed by the United States in the 19th century could be repeated in the form of the annexation of Lower California and North Mexico, subjecting the rest of the country to the same conditions faced by their southern neighbours in Central America, Guatemala and others.

Europe is therefore not 'under construction', as unfortunately Carroll and others are so quick to conclude, basing their judgments on fragile and limited criteria relating to the interdependence of the short-term interests of 'European' monopolies. The ongoing crisis will most likely, in my opinion, inform the 'deconstruction' of Europe. In the instance that Germany fails to impose its project of a 'German Europe', Berlin could take the initiative to leave the euro and to withdraw to a mark zone incorporating the Netherlands, Scandinavia, eastern Europe and the Balkans (more or less followed by Italy and Spain)—without worrying too much about compromising with France and Great Britain. Could this be a return to the Europe of the 1930s?

11.5 Faced with this Challenge, Are the Peoples' Responses Effective? Under Which Conditions?

The people, those from the centres (the triad) and those from the peripheries (emerging or not) are not confronted by the 'challenge of globalisation' but by the spread of the collective imperialism of the powers (plural) of the triad. Proper

analysis of this challenge requires us to go upstream of 'globalisation' in order to examine the major transformations of capitalism that control it.

Here I intend to describe these transformations by connecting the various aspects of their existence into what I have labelled 'widespread monopoly capitalism'. What I mean by this is a new stage of the capitalism of the monopoly-holders which is characterised by the submission of the set of national production systems that is concerned with the domination of these monopolies, which, by the way, suck up much of the surplus value produced in the dominant sectors. I refer the reader to my book on 'The Crisis' again. This virtually complete (and new) domination has inspired within me the idea of moving towards the domination of abstract capital, based on the dispossession of the historical bourgeoisies for their own good. The expression for it is 'financialisation'.

In his work on the emergence of a 'transnational bourgeoisie' (transatlantic in fact), Carroll does not rely solely on the argument (which is both limited and fragile in my opinion) regarding the exchanged representations between various boards of directors; he strengthens his argument by highlighting the institutionalised political instruments that this newly forming class have given themselves. His analyses of the functions carried out by nine of these institutions are worth recalling:

1. While the International Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1919, its role has become new and considerably more decisive since the recent creation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
2. The Bilderberg Conference in 1952 (Society of Mount Pèlerin), led by Hayek –; the mentor of liberalism without borders or boundaries—managed to popularise discourse on neoliberalism amongst politicians, media heavyweights and the high-grade militaries of the countries within the triad. The Trilateral Commission, established in 1973, gave the discourse a quasi-official tone, to which governments and major political parties in the triad—from the right and the left—have joined. The World Economic Forum (Davos) then took over by continuing to promote the discourse from 1982 onwards.
3. More recently the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, created in 1995, aimed 'to dress in green' the strategies for expansion of capitalist monopolies in order to rally together high-riding environmental opinions.
4. On the European level, from 1984 the European Round Table of Industrialists took on an important role, becoming the major source of influence for decisions made in Brussels concerning the European Union.
5. Parallel to this, in 1995 the partners of the triad put in place two instruments to facilitate their long-term dialogues; the Transatlantic Business Dialogue and the European Union/Japan Round Table; meanwhile in 2006, NAFTA established the North American Competitiveness Council.

Although the discourses developed within such institutions are well known and banal to the extreme—simply rather conservative—it is necessary to voice them and to repeat them because these 'think tanks 'benefit from an honourable reputation in terms of bringing into their folds those who 'know best' how to tackle certain issues. The Citizen—Spectator base today is largely convinced that no one

can understand the economic problems better than the entrepreneurs. We have forgotten that the sole concern of these entrepreneurs is to ensure that their profits are maximised as far as possible; unemployment, for example, is not their problem. As such, economic issues are being studied through a distorted lens.

From these observations, Carroll draws all too easily the conclusion that there is an emerging 'transatlantic bourgeoisie'. I will not say much more about this, except that the convergence of representation styles is not sufficient evidence of the above. The European royal courts of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries were equally populated by characters that shared the same ways of thinking, and this did not preclude any conflict. Today, in the same vein, I claim that the bourgeoisie of the triad share the same way of thinking, yet this does not mean that they are any less 'national'—even in Europe. Moreover, they are simply aware that it is necessary for them to put on a united front in the face of their common enemy—the global South and more particularly China. Therefore, they constitute the foundations of what I have labelled the collective imperialism of the Triad.

Are we soon to witness the deepening crisis adding to the development of conflicting interests between the collective imperialism's national partners? It seems that this will likely be the case. It will put to question the already-damaged forms of globalisation that currently exist.

However, faced with this new challenge, Carroll's proposed new counter-strategies seem to me to be inadequate. The reason for this is due to the fact that Carroll is still caught up in the globalisation bubble; he believes it is possible to build a 'better globalisation' than that which exists already and does not see that prior to this what actually needs to be addressed is its deconstruction, in order to reconstruct it later on, on other possible foundations.

Faced with the institutions created by the transnational bourgeoisie, Carroll proposes a counter-strategy, in which four promising new institutions emerge. These are: (1) the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC); (2) the Transnational Institute Amsterdam, itself a branch of the Institute for Policy Studies based in Washington; (3) Friends of the Earth International (FoEI); and (iv) the World Social Forum (WSF), which was first held in Porto Alegre in 2001.

Beyond the differing nuances and concerns specific to each of these institutions, a single common denominator unifies them as a coherent group. First, these institutions are largely 'reformist', sometimes to the extreme, like the ITUC, who no longer even defends the 'old-style' social democratic programmes—a compromise between capital and labour worthy of the name—and is satisfied with minor proposals aimed at alleviating the most dramatic social consequences of the policies dictated by the monopolies. The FoEI is not interested in examining the fundamental relationship between capitalist logic and ecological disaster and as such is able to act as a viable interlocutor for the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). The WSF charter forbids the research of credible alternative policies and is satisfied with simply recording the spontaneous societal changes that are produced by the 'resistance'.

In a relentless critical analysis of the practices of a number of institutions labelled as, among other things, 'anti-systemic' or 'non-profit', Michel Chossudovsky describes

the inconsistencies demonstrated by these 'manufactured' institutions; he claims that they are in fact destined to serve the system and that they also generously finance these self-described 'anti-systemic' finance programmes ('Manufacturing Dissent', website Chossudovsky 2010).

Without necessarily going as far as Chossudovsky, I would say that the general strategy employed by these institutions—and others of a similar nature—is based on the search for a 'new consensus' able to effectuate 'another globalisation'—better than that which has been shaped by the elite. This strategy is, in my opinion, condemned to failure, because it ignores the lessons of history. I have pointed out that the first long and systemic crisis of the capitalism only found its 'solution' after 30 years of wars and revolutions. It was these power struggles, both social and newly international, that gave rise to the 'three golden decades' (1945–1975). According to my analysis, it was during this period that three families of 'development models' (arising from the compromise between social democracy, Sovietism and popular national development) comfortably coexisted with a parallel 'pluricentric globalisation'.

There is absolutely no reason to think things will be any different in the future. We must question the construction of globalisation and deconstruct it before 'another globalisation' becomes possible. This is true for globalisation today (that is to say, the global domination of the collective imperialist triad); it's also true for Europe.

Alternative strategies can only be effective if they are radical. In other words, both by working on the deconstruction of the existing system and by initiating progress towards building an alternative system which, in my opinion, should be socialist-driven, in the sense that it must consciously shake itself free from the shackles of capitalist logic.

Chapter 12
Africa 50 Years of Independence

12.1 Interview by RFI: Afrique: 50 Ans D'independance Africa's Failing and The Global System

RFI: Would you say that you're among the pessimists who regard the five decades of African independence as five lost decades?[1]

SAMIR AMIN: I'm not a pessimist and I don't think that these have been five lost decades. I remain extremely critical, extremely severe with respect to African states, governments and the political class, but I'm even more critical about the global system, which is responsible, to a great degree, for Africa's failings. You know that colonisation which we brag about today has been a historic catastrophe. At the time of the end of its colonisation, there were nine Congolese educated to university level in the Belgian Congo. After 30 years of Mobutu's regime—one of the vilest regimes ever—this figure grew to hundreds of thousands. In other words, the worst African regime was 3,000, 5,000 times better that the wonderful Belgian colonisation. It's important to remember these things.

RFI: When you point the finger at a global system in large part responsible for Africa's position today, what specific criticism are you directing at this system?

SAMIR AMIN: At the time of Africa's independence, Africa was, and remains today, the 'soft belly'—the most vulnerable part of the global system. And a vulnerable part of the global system is condemned by the logic of this system to be exploited. The overexploitation in Africa is primarily in the grabbing of the continent's natural resources. In other words, Africa is useful for the global system in the sense that it is a source of fabulous natural resources. A useful Africa is an Africa without Africans. For the global system, the African people are too much. They're not part of these fringe workers, save immigrants, who are themselves exploited. What's interesting for imperialism—to call it by its contemporary name—are the natural resources of Africa. And why is Africa vulnerable? Because after having

[1] First published by *Pambazuka News,* 8 December 2010 (website). The copyright for this text belongs to the author.

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gained their independence, African countries have not been sufficiently engaged—at all—in a path of rapid industrialisation. I say the opposite to what is generally said: 'Industrialisation? It's for later on. Africa is not ready for industrialisation.'

This used to be said about China 50 years ago. This used to be said about South Korea. These are exactly the countries who industrialised, who industrialised in a purposeful way, who today represent the world's emerging countries. Africa is 50 years behind. Within this 50-year delay, there's an important responsibility among the political class. But the weakness of this class of leaders—the fact that they have accepted the status of client for the West—does not diminish the responsibility of the Western countries.

RFI: Is there not a risk in this of putting these countries in the position of victims? Today's leaders in Africa are political players.

SAMIR AMIN: Of course they're political players! These are the subaltern allies within the global system, so they have as much responsibility as their patrons. But their patron has as much responsibility as them. Let's take a simple question, that of corruption, because everybody talks about corruption and it's true that a good number of African politicians are corrupted to the extreme. But those who corrupt them are not less responsible.

RFI: Let's look back at history. 1960 was the year of independence for a number of African countries. Others got their independence earlier, but 1960 was an important year for many francophone African countries and certain anglophone ones. Where were you during that period?

SAMIR AMIN: I was in Africa. I'd been in Egypt, in my country, between 1957 and 1960. In September 1960, I went to Bamako. I think it was even the day on which independence was proclaimed, or the day after. So from the beginning, I'd made the choice of wanting to put my modest abilities at the service of the development of the new Africa, the independent Africa.

RFI: How did you find that independence day?

SAMIR AMIN: I experienced it with a lot of passion and hope. Having regained their independence, these countries were finally going to be able to engage in a development worthy of the name—that is to say quickly, in a strong yet just manner—for everybody's benefit, for the benefit of the popular classes.

I hadn't chosen to go to Mali randomly. It was because the Malian government—the part which was calling itself the Sudanese Union at the time—had made radical choices, that is to say a choice based on independence, a choice of independence that was not based on rhetoric but which was real, by battling on the ground to gain the largest possible room for manoeuvre and making the history of this party widely one of listening to the popular classes, notably the peasantry. Many conditions were in place for an auspicious start. And this start wasn't bad, but the country remained extremely vulnerable, not only for geographic reasons—a very big country with a small population at the time (there were scarcely 4 million people), with enormous and uncontrollable borders, without access to the sea, and therefore with all sorts of reasons to be vulnerable.

The drift came soon after, something for which the local political leaders had a particular responsibility because they had created a margin for manoeuvre which

they hadn't used in the best way. The drift towards power—I would not say personal, but the power of an elite and a minority, including personal power—proved very quick.

RFI: There are other countries that made a choice: Guinea and Ghana advocated for economic independence, notably in relation to their former colonisers. In observing these countries at the time, did you perceive all the problems which would develop in the 1970 s and 1980 s?

SAMIR AMIN: Yes and no. I would not have the audacity to say that I had predicted everything, but I saw fairly quickly the difficulties and the possible consequences and what happened with Mali, and also with Ghana. I was in Ghana and Ghana always gave me a good impression. In other words, despite the difficulties, it had a capacity to recover, something which proved the case, albeit with highs and lows of course. Guinea gave me a deplorable impression from the start—that is to say the impression of an extremely authoritarian government, especially president Sékou Touré, who was a good politician in the sense of knowing how to manoeuvre. He sometimes knew how to make concessions where necessary or things of this nature; he could sometimes negotiate internationally, but he had no political culture, no vision of the real difficulties and demands of development.

The bare minimum of development demands, has demanded and will always demand a certain type of democracy—not in the sense of a blueprint (or of a fixed recipe comprising multipartyism and elections which most of the time prove worthless)—not only within conditions in Africa, but elsewhere too, including in Europe, because you can vote how you like in Europe and the result is as if you haven't voted at all, and also in the sense of taking the social dimension into consideration. In other words, it demands a democracy associated with social progress—and not disassociated from social progress—and not associated a fortiori with social regression, as is the case at the current time when there are few elements of democracy.

RFI: Do you consider the political failings of these countries as a failure of the ideas that you've defended or of the application of these ideas?

SAMIR AMIN: An argument based on 'these were good ideas but their implementation was poor' is not my line of reasoning. If the implementation was poor, then the ideas themselves weren't perfect. I wouldn't say that they were poor. It could be said that the principles adopted by a certain number of African countries on the dawn of their independence were good, but that's not enough. You've got to go further than that. These ideas need to be translated into sub-ideas—I would say into action points—and then we've seen contradictions quickly appear.

RFI: Does Africa have a place in globalisation … which you've criticised, or else?

SAMIR AMIN: Africa must find its place. If it must, it will. But this is a bit theoretical. In the short term, Africa remains extremely vulnerable. And as I was saying, in the coming future, Africa remains for the whole world—especially the developed capitalist powers—a source of primary materials, whether this be hydrocarbons, uranium, rare minerals, rare metals (very important for the future), the opening of agricultural land under the expansion of Western, Chinese,

Brazilian and others' agribusiness, the sun (with electricity being transferred long distances) or water. International capital is purely concerned with these opportunities. For international capital, Africa, Africans, don't exist. The African continent is a geographic continent full of resources. And this is against the idea that Africa should organise, not only to refuse to submit to this looting, but in order to use these natural resources for its own development.

RFI: Following independence, various state leaders tried to put into place approaches to development said to be auto-centred or more independent that the former colonisers: Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana… These approaches didn't achieve their goals. Today there is a period of complete globalised capitalism. What is there to do?

SAMIR AMIN: These means and these leaders didn't achieve their goals, it's true. But nor did the others. At the time there was a lot of boasting about Houphouët-Boigny's choice to open up Côte d'Ivoire as an unregulated, uncontrolled country. And where's Côte d'Ivoire today? I think its situation is even worse than Ghana's. This is to say that, despite everything—the heritage, the positive bits of what Nkrumah did—it's because of this that Ghana is in a better situation today than a neighbouring country while being comparable with Côte d'Ivoire in assets, agricultural type, natural resources and by size.

RFI: Today, what room for manoeuvre do African states have to find a middle ground?

SAMIR AMIN: This room for manoeuvre is experiencing a rebirth precisely because of the success of the 'emerging' countries: China, India, Brazil and other less important ones like South Korea, and, even within Africa, South Africa (the only one on the continent). These countries are already in conflict with Western countries. This was seen during Obama's visit to Beijing and subsequent visits. And this conflict, which isn't simply about access to natural resources but also access to markets and to finance, is going to intensify. Equally, this conflict constitutes a guarantee that the growth of the project of military control of the planet by the United States, which is bad at the moment, won't continue. Even if there are differences, these emerging countries will understand that they have an interest in contributing to this renaissance, to the reconstitution (there isn't a reconstitution in history), of something like a Bandung—in other words, I wouldn't go as far as saying a common front, but a broad alliance, even with the most vulnerable countries of the African continent, by means of collectively reinforcing and putting Western ambitions and the looting of the continent on the decline.

RFI: Many African countries are turning to China and India, sometimes as if they were a lifeline for overcoming their problems. Isn't this a mistake? Won't the solution instead be to know how to play with different partners?

SAMIR AMIN: Playing with different partners is a dangerous game. At the time of Bandung, many countries—including Nasser's Egypt—wanted to play on the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, playing the Soviet card at times, and the American at others. They lost on both counts. I think that today, a country which engages—let's say an active diplomacy—which plays a Chinese card one day and an American one the next, would fail in the same way.

Conversely, I think that it's necessary to work towards rebuilding this group of 77 (the 77 are much greater in number today and the group of 77 is called the '77 plus China' within the United Nations). The Chinese offer to many African countries what the West does not: the construction of a huge infrastructure, which is one of the conditions of possible development, of an industrial development, of a development worthy of the name, which isn't simply a few agricultural products for export under miserable conditions, but rather transport infrastructure, railways, roads. After all, following independence the only example of the construction of a large railway in the history of modern Africa has been Tanzam, which was carried out by the Chinese. Now, alas it isn't possible that in the race for natural resources, the Chinese, the Brazilians and others would behave especially different, differently from the Western countries.

RFI: Doesn't Africa risk falling into the same situation but with different partners?

SAMIR AMIN: No, I don't think so, because the partners are different. The Chinese and the Brazilians are not in the same situation as the United States or Europe. Firstly, they don't have a project of military control of the planet like the United States. If the United States has a project of military control of the planet, Europe, alas, follows. Europe—with its involvement in NATO—is simply a subaltern ally of the United States. No matter one's opinion on the nature of their political classes and their choices around economic and social development, neither China, India or Brazil is in the same situation.

RFI: Many observers speak of a period in history for Africa as a kind of second independence, especially for French-speaking Africa. What do you think about this?

SAMIR AMIN: These are great words. We're in a second wave. It could be better or it could be worse than the first—history is always open. Despite the title of René Dumont's book, 'L'Afrique noire est mal partie', Africa didn't start too badly. It started off badly in certain respects, with certain plans, and René Dumont was right on this point, on agriculture. But Africa, which didn't get off to too bad a start in 1960, quickly got stuck, and I hope that what it is being proposed does become a second wave of independence—if we're going to call it that—for the African continent.

Chapter 13
Aid for Development

13.1 Aid for What Development?

A discussion of aid, regardless of the donor, must begin with lucid consideration of the development vision and strategy adopted by the recipient state in question.[1] During the 1981 G7 summit in Cancun, western powers, through President Reagan and supported by his European colleagues, proclaimed that they know better than the countries of the south themselves what needs to be done. The Washington Consensus and structural adjustment programs have translated this position into action that continues do this day, essentially signalling a return to colonisation. Despite the profound economic crisis, which should, without a doubt, put into question the global vision of liberal globalisation that is not the case.

Development cannot be distilled to a mere economic dimension—the growth of Gross Domestic Product and the expansion of markets for exports and internal trade. Instead any analysis must take into consideration its social dimensions, e.g. the extent of inequitable income distribution, access to common goods such as health and education.

'Development' is a holistic process that implies the definition of its political objectives and their articulation such as the democratisation of society and the emancipation of individuals, affirmation of the 'nation' as well as power and autonomy of these in the global system. The choice and the definition of its objectives are at the heart of opposing debates in the long-term vision as well as the strategy and actions proposed for development, including aid. Importantly, 'the demise of development' is general, like that of aid, since dependence increases with time. The search for a positive alternative ('another aid is possible', 'in the service of another, equally possible, development') should be at the heart of the debate.

[1] This text was first published as "Aid for 'development'? Or instrument conceived to dominate vulnerable economies", May 2009; at: <http://forumtiersmonde.net/fren/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=247:aid-for-development-or-instrument-conceived-to-dominate-vulnerable-economies&catid=1:latest-news&Itemid=108>. The copyright for this text belongs to the author.

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13.2 From the Paris Declaration (2005) to the Accra Declaration (2008)

The aid debate is confined to a tight framework defined in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) which was written by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and 'endorsed by' (read, imposed on) beneficiary countries. Western powers and international institutions such as the World Bank, through the Accra Agenda for Action (2008), expect to implement the principles that they themselves have unilaterally defined.

13.2.1 Legitimacy

If, as is professed, there are two 'partners' in aid—in principle equal—the donor and recipient states, the architecture of the system should have been negotiated between these two 'partners'. Yet, the initiative has been unilateral with the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)–a department of the OECD–taking sole responsibility for the drafting of the Paris declaration.

Like the Millennium Declaration, drafted by the State department of the United States to be read by the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) at the UN General Assembly, the Paris Declaration did not engage the international community. In fact, 'non-western' countries that are not recipients of potential aid, and in particular those that are themselves donors, have, with absolute legitimacy, refused to associate themselves with the 'donors club' proposed by the declaration. To truly engage the international community, a UN commission on 'aid' would have to have been created that would have been inclusive from the beginning and truly put each state on an equal footing. However, the process has been inscribed by the triad (the US-Canada-Australia, Europe and Japan) as part of a strategy to diminish the UN and substitute the latter with the G7 and its instruments, which falsely qualifies itself as the 'international community'.

13.2.2 What Constitutes Aid?

The DAC definition of what constitutes international aid (ODA) is disputable. The definition is itself a product of a political strategy, that of 'liberal globalisation', established by dominant powers in the global system (the triad) and is fraught with ambiguity and contradiction, since, on the one hand, the definition proclaims some important principles, in particular the right of countries to appropriate aid (defined in terms of ownership) and that of 'partnership'. But on the other hand it details modalities that render enforcement of these principles infeasible.

General conditionality, defined by the alignment to the principles of liberal globalisation, is omnipresent: at times with explicit reference to giving preference

to liberalisation, open markets and becoming 'attractive' to private foreign investors; at other times, through indirect expression such as 'respecting the rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO)'.

Within this framework, the Paris declaration is retrogressive as compared to the practices of the 'development decades' (1960–1970) when the principle of free choice by Southern countries regarding their system and their economic and social policies was acknowledged.

The asymmetric relationship between donors and recipients is reinforced by the insistence on 'harmonisation' of donor policies. This appealing term is in reality a call for alignment to the 'Washington Consensus' and the 'post-Washington Consensus' (barely different), that is to say still within the framework of liberal globalisation. This harmonisation (the donors club, integrating the World Bank, the OECD, the European Union etc.) reduces the margin of gains afforded southern countries during the development decades. Some Scandinavian countries however, courageously decided not to support the program of centralized development and to support the establishment of autonomous think tanks in the South mandated to freely develop alternative development models.

Rather than 'partnership' the current aid and development architecture 'strengthens the control exercised by the collectivity of triad states on recipient states. Again, this is a regression, compared to the achievements made during the Bandung era. The term 'partnership' has been used precisely because that is not what is wanted. As George Orwell notes, diplomacy prefers to talk of peace when it is preparing war—it is more effective.

The Paris and Accra declarations, certainly as an attempt to compensate for the contradictions between declared principles and strategies for implementation, focus on, what the South Centre accurately calls, the 'litany of false problems', among them:

1. The Capacity of Absorption
   The 'volume' of global aid doesn't depend on this capacity, which is impossible to define. Rather, it depends on the political objectives of the triad. When the budget of a country is 25 or 50 % dependent on external aid, that country no longer has the means to 'negotiate' its participation in the global system. It is no longer truly independent, analogous to the semi-colonies of the 19th century, thus, extravagant volumes of aid are useful, perhaps necessary.
2. Should global aid volumes be increased or reduced?
   The endless debate on the 1 %, become 0.7 %, defines the terms of this false question. The volume of useful aid is that, associated with adequate strategies, which allows gradual reduction until aid is no longer needed. The terms of the false debate elude the true question focusing instead on doubtful and ineffective terrain regarding morality and charity.
3. Aid performance
   The principle criteria for aid performance can only be the appreciation of results. Has aid enabled growth, employment, improved income, strengthened the autonomy of the productive system nationally with regards to external pressures? Has the aid itself enabled its own redundancy? Instead of this criteria,

> the Paris and Accra declarations have created a jungle of twelve (illegible) performance matrices and a rating system inspired by that used for the solvability of banks. This procedure is no doubt attractive to bureaucrats but it is certainly useless for the rest of us.

The declarations reinforced the means of political control of the triad by the adjunction of general economic and political conditionality of liberal globalisation: respect for human rights, electoral and plural democracy, good governance, amongst others.

Democratisation of societies is a long and difficult process, produced by social and political struggles within the country itself. This struggle cannot be replaced by sermons from the heroes of good causes, national and a fortiori foreign, or by 'diplomatic' pressure. The declarations attempt to ease the gravity of the consequences of the strategies of (structural adjustment, liberal globalisation) by creating a new discourse: that of 'poverty' and 'poverty reduction', to which aid should give priority.

13.2.3 Poverty, Civil Society, Good Governance: The Weak Rhetoric of Dominant Aid Discourse

The dominant discourse defines the objective of aid to be the reduction (perhaps eradication in the most 'radical' discourse) of poverty, by supporting 'civil society' and replacing governance that is deemed 'bad' by 'good governance'.

The word 'poverty' comes from the old language of charity (religious and otherwise). This language belongs to the past, not the present, let alone the future. It is antithetical to the language developed by modern social philosophers, looking to be scientific, that is to discover mechanisms that engender an observable and observed phenomenon.

The way it is proposed, the 'civil society' that is called to assist aligns with the consensus that: (1) there is no alternative to the 'market economy' (a vulgar expression to substitute analysis of 'real and existing capitalism'); (2) there is no alternative to representative democracy founded on an electoral multi-party system (conceived as 'democracy') substituting the democratisation of society, which is a continuous process.

Civil society is therefore the combination of neighbourhood collectives, of 'communities (the concept being inseparable from ideology of communitarism), of local 'interests' (school, hospital and open spaces) themselves inseparable from the segments of crumbling ideologies, separated one from the other ('gender' understood in a restrictive sense, respect for nature, equally instituted in objectives separable from the others). Even if the demands of these assemblies that constitute the claimed 'civil society' is perfectly legitimate (and it is), the absence of, whether desired or not, their integration in a united social vision implies the accession to the dogma of consensus. In other words, even if these demands were met,

nothing would change. This ideology comes from across the Atlantic and is not derived from the historical political cultures of Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Despite their varying degrees of difference, these political cultures are those of recognized conflicts of social interests, attributable to creative democracy and the power to imagine alternatives, not merely alternations in the exercise of an unchanged pattern of power.

In their place, the fashionable and dominant discourse gives eminence to NGOs and sees the state as the adversary. In the 'third world', favoured NGOs are often GONGOs (governmental NGOs) or MNGOs (NGOs operating like mafias) or TNGOs (NGOS carrying out donor politics), etc.

'Governance' was invented as a substitute to 'power'. The clash between good or bad governance is reminiscent of Manichaeism and moralism, substituting scientific analysis of reality. Again, this framework comes from the US, where sermons have often dominated political discourse.

'Good governance' implies that the 'decision maker' be 'just', 'objective' (has the 'best solution'), 'neutral' (accepting symmetrical presentations of arguments), and above all 'honest' (including, of course, in the financial sense of the word). Reading the World Bank literature is like re-reading grievances written by men (and few women!) of religion and/or of law in the ancient Orient to the 'just'despot (not even 'enlightened'!).

The inherent visible ideology is employed to evade the real question: what social interest does the power that be represent or defend? How do we transform power so that it progressively becomes the instrument of the majority, in particular, the victims of the system? Within this framework, the multi-party electoral recipe has proved its limits.

13.3 Geo-Economic, Geo-Political and Geo-Strategic Aid

Aid policies, the choice of beneficiaries, the forms of intervention, their immediate apparent objectives are inseparable from geopolitical objectives.

Sub-Saharan Africa is perfectly integrated into the global system, and in no way 'marginalized' as is too often claimed: foreign trade represents 45 % of its GDP, compared to 30 % for Asia and Latin America and 15 % for each of the three regions of the triad. Africa is therefore quantitatively more, not less, integrated, but the continent is integrated differently into the system.

The geo-economy of the region rests on two decisive sets of production in the making of its structures and the definition of its place in the global system:

1. 'Tropical' agricultural export production: coffee, cocoa, cotton, peanut, fruits, palm oil etc.
2. Hydro-carbons and mining production: copper, rare metals, uranium, diamonds.

The first are survival means, beyond the food-production for auto-consumption of farmers, that finance the graft of the state on the local economy and, beginning

with public spending, the reproduction of the middle classes. The term 'banana republic' responds, beyond the contemptuous meaning that it carries, to the reality of the status that dominant powers give to the geo-economy of the region. These productions interest local ruling classes more than they do dominant economies.

However, what greatly interests the latter are the natural resources of the continent. Today, hydrocarbons and rare minerals, tomorrow, the reserves for development of agro-fuels, the sun (when long-distance transportation of solar energy will be possible), and, in a few decades, water (when direct or indirect export will be possible).

The race to rural territories destined to be converted for the expansion of agro-fuels has begun in Latin America. Africa offers, in this regard, a gigantic possibility. Madagascar has initiated the movement and already conceded important areas in the west of the country. The implementation of the Congolese rural code (2008), inspired by Belgium cooperation and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) will, without a doubt, allow agri-business to seize large tracks of agricultural land to exploit them, as the Mining Code permitted the pillage of mining resources from the colony some time ago. Farmers, considered 'useless', will pay the price; the aggravated misery that awaits them will perhaps interest the humanitarian aid of tomorrow—the aid programs for poverty reduction! Indeed in the 1970s, an old colonial dream for the Sahel was to expel its population (the useless) to create ranches (Texas-style) for widespread livestock farming for export. This new phase of history is characterized by the intensification of conflicts for access to the natural resources of the planet. The triad expects to reserve exclusive access to 'useful' Africa (that of natural resource reserves) and prohibit access to 'emerging' countries whose needs in this regard are already considerable and will increase. The guarantee of this exclusive access requires political control and the reduction of African countries to the status of 'client' states.

Foreign aid fulfils an important role in the maintenance of states as client states. It is therefore not excessive to argue that the objective of aid is to 'corrupt' the ruling classes. Beyond the financial drain (unfortunately well know and for which donors pretend they can't help it!) aid has become 'indispensable' (since it has become an important source of financing for national budgets) and therefore of full political interest. It is therefore important that aid be reserved exclusively and integrally to the classes in charge, in 'government'. Aid must also equally interest the 'opposition', capable of succeeding the government. The role of civil society and of certain NGOs finds its place here.

To be truly politically effective, aid must equally contribute to maintaining the insertion of farmers in this global system, while feeding the other source of revenue of the state. Aid is therefore equally interested in the 'modernisation' of export cultures and facilitate access to common goods (education, health and housing) of the middle classes and fractions (primarily urban) of popular classes. The client state's political functioning depends, to a large extent, on these conditions.

Nevertheless there will always be projects that will escape these criteria of global political effectiveness, expressed herein with lucidity (that others will call cynicism). Aid that Scandinavian countries (Sweden in particular) provided, during the Bandung era, to the radical and critical thinking and action bears witness to the

positive reality of this type of aid. During the Bandung era and the decades of development, Asia and Africa began counter-geopolitics, defined by Southern states, to push the geopolitics of the triad back. The conditions of the era—military bipolarity, global boom and the growing demand for Southern exports—allowed this counter-offensive to flourish, constraining the triad to make minor and major concessions in particular instances. Specifically, the military bipolarity prohibited the United States and its associates in the triad to strengthen their geopolitical power through a geo-strategy founded on the permanent threat of military intervention.

The pages of this era having turned, the geo-politics of the triad, at the service of its geo-economy, finds itself strengthened by the deployment of its geo-strategy. Which is why the UN had to be marginalized and replaced, with cynicism by NATO—the armed branch of the triad. This explains why the discourse around external security of the triad has taken centre stage. The 'war on terror' and on 'rogue states' attempt to legitimise the geo-strategy of the triad and hence take prominence.

13.4 The Contours of an Aid Alternative

13.4.1 An Abrupt Rupture from the Current Aid Architecture is, Alas, Not Desirable

It would signal a declaration of war, aiming to destabilise the powers that be and maybe even, beyond that, the destruction of the state. This strategy has in fact been, and is, used (the blockades on Cuba and Zimbabwe are good examples).

The choice is not between aid as it is or no aid at all. The battle must be waged for radical transformation of the concepts regarding the function of aid, as the South Centre argues. This is primarily an intellectual battle, which should not have boundaries. This struggle is relevant to all those that propose the construction of another world (better), another globalisation, an authentically polycentric world system, respectful of the free (and different) choice of states, nations and peoples on the planet. Let us leave the monopoly on the production of recipes for all to the World Bank and the arrogant technocrats of the 'north' to impose.

The moral arguments in favour of debt in the north with respect to the South, giving all its legitimacy to the principle of 'aid' (becoming therefore 'solidarity') are not without value. More convincing, and politically grounded, are arguments related to solidarity of peoples faced with the challenges of the future. In particular, the consequences of climate change. The project to create a convention on climate change (the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC) is an acceptable starting point to envision financing from opulent countries (responsible in the first instance for the deterioration of the global environment) for programs that benefit all of the peoples of the planet, and in particular those that are most vulnerable. But precisely because this initiative began within the UN, western diplomats seek, at the very least, impede (if not sabotage) its development.

The elaboration of a global vision of aid cannot be delegated to the OECD, the World Bank or the European Union. This responsibility is that of the UN alone. That this organisation is, by its very nature, limited by the monopoly of states, supposedly representing their people, is what it is. Strengthening more direct presence of peoples alongside states deserves attention, but, this presence must be conceived to reinforce the UN and is not replaceable by NGO participation (pulled out of a hat) at conferences conceived and managed by the North (and manipulated by Northern diplomats).

I would therefore give priority of support to initiatives taken by ECOSOCC (the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the United Nations) in 2005 for the creation of a Development Cooperation Forum (DCF). This initiative began the construction of authentic partnerships within a polycentric global perspective. The initiative is, as one can imagine, very badly received by diplomats of the triad.

But, we have to go further and dare to reach a 'red line'. Not to 'reforming' the World Bank, the WTO and the IMF. Not to limiting ourselves to denouncing the dramatic consequences of their past and present politics. But to proposing alternative institutions, positively defining their tasks and drawing up their institutional framework.

The debate on alternative aid (united) must immediately eliminate some subjects retained by the DAC under the rubric of ODA which, in reality, is not aid from North to South but, rather the reverse!

1. At the top of the list must be concessional loans provided at below market rates. This is merely aggressive trade policy implemented by triad states (somewhat like dumping) from which Northern exporters are the main beneficiaries.
2. Debt reduction, decided upon almost charitably (as is evidenced by the diplomatic jargon that surround these decisions), should not figure under the rubric of 'aid'. Instead and as a legitimate response, not only morally, to this issue, an audit should be conducted of the debt in question (private and public, from the side of the recipient and the donor). Debts that are recognized as immoral (for instance those that are associated with corrupt operations in one way or another), illegitimate (for instance that which thinly disguises political support as was the case for the apartheid regime of South Africa), usurious (by their interest rates, decided upon unilaterally by 'markets', by the full repayment of their capital and beyond it), should be cancelled, and their victims (debt owing countries) compensated as a result for what has been paid beyond what was owed. A UN Commission should be created to elaboration the international right, worthy of the name. Of course, the triad diplomats do not want to hear any proposal to this effect.

13.4.2 Alternative Aid is Inseparable from the Conceptualisation of Alternative Development

Although this is not the subject of our debate here, it is nevertheless useful, and necessary to reflect on some important principles of development so as to give

clarity to the proposals for alternative aid that follow. These important principles are:

1. Development demands a diversified system of production, which in the first instance engages on the road to industrialisation.
   The tenacious refusal to recognize this necessity in subtropical Africa is remarkable. How else can one comprehend the reference to the so called "insane industrial drift", that should be laughable (which country in Africa is currently 'over-industrialised'!) unfortunately taken up by people in the alternative globalisation movement who are unaware of the real impact of the Bandung era. I suspect actually some racism for the peoples in question, within this proposal. On the contrary, is it not plain that it is precisely those countries engaged on the 'insane' path who are today 'emerging' countries (China, Korea, and others)?
   The incontrovertible industrial perspective does not exclude the call to international capital. Complex and diverse partnership formulae between state and local private capital (when it exists) or foreign capital are certainly admissible, inevitable probably. But, it only makes sense when liberalism is excluded, as it reduces the creation of 'attractive conditions for transnational companies' as the WTO and aid agencies recommend. Real partnership in strategic decision-making, control of re-exported profits must accompany industrialisation strategies.
2. Diversification (including industrialisation), incontrovertible, demands certainly the construction of infrastructures that do not exist in recipient countries of aid which has become indispensable to their survival.
   Social infrastructures: No development without quality education, from the base to the summit, and without a population in good health. Here there is potential for financial and technical aid that is indisputably positive, become solidarity. The eradication of pandemics, of AIDS, are evident examples.
3. Diversification and industrialisation will demand the construction of forms of adequate regional cooperation. Continental countries can without a doubt do without it but, for those of 'medium' population size (from 50 millions upwards) can initiate the process alone, knowing that they will rapidly reach terrain that they will only pass through with regional cooperation.
   The form that regional cooperation takes must reinvent itself to be coherent with the objectives of the type of development spelt out here. Regional 'common markets', which dominate the institutions in place currently (when they exist and function) are not in line with this development as they are conceived as blocs constitutive of liberal globalisation. I refer here to my paper 'Regionalisation, which regionalisation?'.
4. Rural and agricultural development must be at the center of the definition of a strategy for another development, not just presently but even for more strongly in the long succession of advanced phases of development.
   It is not enough here to proclaim the priority of agriculture as many do. The type of agriculture must also be defined. Coherent alternative development with

diversification as its objectives imposes the translation of some grand principles into concrete policy:

– Give priority to food producers within the food sovereignty (as defined by Via Campesina) and not food sovereignty framework.
  The latter, promoted by the World Bank and retained by the Paris and Accra Declarations, is the origin of the on-going food crisis.
  This priority implies not only that farmers produce more to first feed themselves (the majority of under-nourished people are rural), but also to produce the excess necessary to satisfy the urban demand. This is obviously part of 'modernisation' policy certainly different from the models of modernisation that farmers of the developed world today were submitted to.
– Conceive development policy on agriculture founded on the maintenance of significant rural populations.
  As equal access as possible to land and the correct means to exploit it, commands this conception of farmer agriculture. This implies agrarian reform, strengthening of cooperation, adequate macro-economic policies (credit, provision of inputs, commercialisation of products). These measures are different to those put in place historically by capitalism in Europe and North America which was founded on the appropriation of land, its reduction into a merchandise, a rapid social differentiation of peasantry and the rapid expulsion of 'useless' rural surplus.
  The option recommended by the dominant system, not put into question by the Paris and Accra Declarations, is situated at the antipodes of advanced principles. Founded on the financial profitability, short-term productivity (rapidly increasing production, at the cost of accelerated expulsion of farmers in surplus), it responds certainly well to trans-national interests of agro-business and of an associated new class of farmers, but not to that of popular classes and the nation.
– Radically put into question liberal globalisation of production and international commerce of agricultural and food products.
  On these important questions, we can only refer to Jacques Berthelot's remarkable work which provide the best analysis of the catastrophes that liberalisation has produced, and continues to produce, the best arguments notably concerning the fundamental asymmetries that characterize the Cotonou Convention, the so called projects of "economic partnership", the debates on the subvention of exports from the North and more generally the negotiations at the heart of the WTO. The rebirth of farmers movements in francophone west Africa, organised within the Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organisations of West Africa, a stakeholder in our debates, bears witness that the option for the farmers path is necessarily in conflict with the dominant productivist options in the circuit organized by the OECD, the WTO and the EU. The alternative passes by national policy of construction/reconstruction of national stabilisation funds and support for the concerned products through the implementation of common international funds for base products, permitting an effective alternative reorganisation of international markets of agricultural products. I would also refer here to the propositions made by Jean Pierre Boris.

5. Alternative development framework provided here imposes a true mastering of economic relations with the exterior, amongst them the abandonment of the 'free trade' system claimed as 'regulation of the market', to the benefit of national and regional systems of control of rates of foreign exchange. Beyond the impossible reform of the IMF, the answers to the challenges invites one to imagine the putting in place of regional monetary funds, articulated in regards to a new system of global monetary regulation, which the current crisis makes more necessary than ever. 'Reform' of the IMF doesn't respond to these necessities. In a more general sense, the understanding of external relations, which isn't self-sufficient, defines the contours of what I have qualified as 'delinking', to be constitutive element incontrovertible of the emergence of a negotiated globalisation. This development equally demands control of national natural resources. Alternative development is founded on the principle of priority given to national and regional internal markets and in this framework to the markets that respond in the first instance to the expansion of the demands of the popular classes, not to the global market. This is what I can an auto-centred development.

13.4.3 We Should, Taking as a Point of Departure the Criteria in the Preceding Section, Do an Inventory of the Aid that Countries Receive

1. The principle of international solidarity of peoples, which I defend, legitimizes support for struggles for democratisation of societies, associated with social progress and efforts of critical radical reflection. Does aid currently inscribe itself within this perspective? Aid provided to 'NGOs' that accept submission to dominant conceptions regarding 'democracy' that is reduced to multiparty-ism, dissociated from social progress and even associated to social regression produced by liberalism, certainly does not. But it is not impossible that movements in real struggle for democratic and social progress can benefit from material support expressing moral and political solidarity.
2. An important fraction of aid to NGOs is inscribed within a strategy of substituting the state for 'civil society' in regards to meeting the essential needs of public services. The danger is obvious: this form of 'aid' entails the 'destruction of the state'. The Mozambican example is a well-researched case. What is necessary is a transfer of this aid towards the reconstruction of the state and its capacity to fulfil its functions (public service in education, health, providing water and electricity, public transportation, social housing, social security) and which neither private (who would reserver for themselves the only profitable margins), nor the associative (even benevolent) can respond to correctly.
3. There will always remain a zone of intervention in the name of universal human solidarity that is perfectly legitimate. Assistance to victims of natural disasters, to refugees produced en masse by war, can never wait. It would be

criminal to refuse aid under the pretext that nothing has been established to avoid the deterioration of the underlying causes of these catastrophes (notably wars). However, unacceptable political exploitation of 'humanitarian' situations nevertheless poses a danger. Numerous examples exist.

On the other hand, immediate assistance doesn't exclude the opening of the file regarding the causes of the catastrophe. On the contrary, critical independent reflection of these problems and engagement in necessary social struggles needed to redress these deteriorated struggles must be supported beyond the immediate 'humanitarian' intervention.

13.4.4 North–South Cooperation is not Exclusive

South–South cooperation existed during the Bandung era and demonstrated its effectiveness within the conditions of the era. Support by the non-aligned movement, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), China, the Soviet Union and Cuba, for liberation movements of Portuguese colonies, in Zimbabwe and South Africa, was important and at times decisive. At the time, cooperation of triad countries was absent other than from Sweden and some other Scandinavian countries, as their diplomatic priority was to NATO (which includes Portugal) and support of apartheid.

Today ample opportunities exist to renew South–South cooperation. The South has the means to break the monopoly upon which the supremacy of the triad rests. Certain countries of the South have become not only capable of assimilating the technologies that the North seeks to over protect (precisely because they are nevertheless vulnerable) but also to develop these themselves. If they wish to push these towards a different model of development, more apt to the needs of the South, this could open a large field in South–South cooperation. Countries of the South could equally give priority of access to the natural resources that they control, to the strengthening of their own industrialisation and to that of their partners within South–South cooperation. Certain Southern countries have financial resources that instead of being placed on the financial markets and monetary control of the triad, themselves collapsing, could shatter the monopoly of the North in this domain and the bribery of aid that accompanies it.

These propositions are not romantic. Diplomats of the triad have taken menacing measures in aligning themselves with the insane project of 'military control of the planet' nevertheless become necessary to perpetuate the supremacy of their economies in crisis.

The South can do without the North, the reverse is not true. But for that, the elites of the South must liberate themselves from their internalised dependency thinking, stop thinking that aid is a condition for development of their societies. The South Centre insists, with reason, on this major point of debate regarding the future of development.

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Chapter 14
Emergence and Lumpen Development

14.1 What Is 'Emerging'?

This term has been used by some to mean one thing and by others something entirely different in different contexts, often without any caution regarding precision around the meaning of the term.[1] I will therefore here define the sense that I will give to the set of economic, social, political, and cultural transformations which permit one to speak of the 'emergence' of a state, a nation, and a people who have been placed in a peripheral place in the capitalist world system. (The term peripheral having the meaning that I have defined in my own work).

Emergence is not measured by a rising rate of GDP growth (or exports) over a long period of time (more than a decade), nor the fact that the society in question has obtained a higher level of GDP per capita, as defined by the World Bank, aid institutions controlled by Western powers, and conventional economists.

Emergence involves much more: a sustained growth in industrial production in the state in question and a strengthening of the capacity of these industries to be competitive on a global scale. Again one must define which specific industries are important and what is meant by competitiveness.

Extractive industries (minerals and fossil fuels) must be excluded from this definition. In states endowed by nature with these resources, accelerated growth can occur in these countries without necessarily leaving in its wake productive activities. The extreme example of this situation of 'non-emergence' would be the Gulf States, Venezuela, Gabon, and others.

One must also understand that the competitiveness of productive activities in the economy should be considered as a productive system in its entirety and not a certain unit of production alone. Due to the preference for outsourcing and subcontracting, multinationals operating in the South can be the impetus for the creation of local units of production tied to transnationals, or autonomous and capable

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of exporting to the world market, which earns them the status of competitive in the language of conventional economists. This truncated concept of competitiveness, which proceeds from an empiricist method, is not ours. Competitiveness is that of a productive system. For this to exist, the economy must be made up of productive elements with branches of this production sufficiently interdependent that one can speak of it as a system.

This competitiveness depends upon diverse economic and social factors, among others the general level of education and training of workers of all levels and the efficiency of the group of institutions which manage the national political economy—fiscal policy, business law, labour law, credit, social services, etc. The productive system in question cannot reduce productive transformation to only activities involved in manufacturing and consumption—although the absence of these annuls the existence of a productive system worthy of the name—but rather must integrate food and agriculture as services required for the normal functioning of the system.

A real productive system can be more or less 'advanced'. By this I mean that the group of activities must be qualified: is it involved in 'banal' productions or high technologies? It is important to situate an emerging state using this point of view: in what measure is it on the path of generating value added products? It is important to see emergent states from this point of view: at what stage are they in mounting the ladder towards producing value-added products?

The question of emergence therefore requires both a political and holistic examination. A state cannot be emerging if it is not inward (rather than outward) looking with the goal of creating a domestic market and thus reasserting national economic sovereignty. This complex objective requires sovereignty over all aspects of economic life. In particular it demands policies which protect food sovereignty and sovereignty, and equally sovereignty over one's natural resources and access to others outside of one's territory. These multiple and complementary objectives are contrasted with those of the comprador class who are content to adopt growth models which meet the requirements of the dominant global system (liberal-internationalism) and the possibilities which these offer.

This proposed definition of emergence does not address the political strategy of the state and society: capitalism or socialism? However this question cannot be left out of the debate as the choice made by the leading classes will have major effects, both positive and negative, for a successful emergence. I would not say that the only option is to follow a capitalist perspective, which implements a system of a capitalist nature—control and exploitation of the workforce and a free market. Nor would I suggest that only a radical socialist option which challenges these forms of capitalism—property, organized labour, market controls—is able to last over long periods of time and move the society forwards in the world system.

The links between the politics of emergence on one hand and the accompanying social transformation, on the other hand, do not depend solely on the internal coherence of the former, but equally its degree of complementarity, or conflict, with the latter. Social struggles, whether class based or political, do not adjust themselves to fit the logic of a state's implementation of an emergence. Rather they are a determinant of this program. Current experience shows the diversity and dynamism of

these links. Emergence is often accompanied by inequalities. One must examine the nature of these: inequalities where the beneficiaries are a tiny minority or a large minority (the middle class) and are realised in a framework which promotes the pauperisation of the majority of workers, or, on the contrary, one where the same people see a betterment in their quality of life, even if the growth rates of compensation for workers will be less than those who benefit from the system. Said in another manner, politics can associate emergence with pauperisation or not. Emergence does not follow a definitive set of rules. Rather it is a series of successive steps; the first can prepare the way for following successes, or bring about deadlock.

In the same manner the relation between the emerging economy and the global economy is constantly transforming as well. From these two different perspectives come policies which can promote sovereignty or weaken it, and at the same time promote social solidarity in the nation or weaken it. Emergence is therefore not synonymous with growth in exports and an increase in power measured in such a manner. Growth in exports can strengthen or weaken the autonomy of an emerging state relative to the world market.

We cannot speak of emergence in general, nor can we speak of models—Chinese, Indian, Brazilian and Korean—in general. One must concretely examine, in each case, the successive steps in the evolution of their emergence, identify the strong and weak points, and analyse the dynamic of their implementation and the associated contradictions.

Emergence is a political and not only economic project. The measure of success is therefore determined by reducing the means by which the dominant capitalist centre perpetuates their domination, in spite of the fact that economic success of emergent states is measured in the conventional economic terms. I define the means as control of the dominant powers over the areas of technological development, access to natural resources, the global financial system, dissemination of information, and weapons of mass destruction. The imperialist collective triad—United States, Europe and Japan—intends to conserve, using all of these means, their privileged positions in dominating the planet and prohibiting emergent states from bringing this domination into question. I conclude that the ambitions of emergent states enter into conflict with the strategic objectives of the triad and the measure of the violence emanating from this conflict will be determined by the degree of radicalism with which the emergent state challenges the aforementioned privileges of the centre.

Economic emergence is not separable from the foreign policies of the states. Do they align themselves with the military and political coalition of the triad? Do they accept strategies put in place by NATO? Conversely, will they oppose them?

14.2 Emergence and Lumpen Development

There can be no emergence without state politics, resting on a comfortable social bloc, which gives it legitimacy, capable of constructing a coherent project an inward looking national productive system. They must at the same time ensure the

participation of the great majority of social classes and that these groups receive the benefits of growth.

Opposing the favourable evolution of an authentic emergence is the unilateral submission to the requirements of the implementation of global capitalism and general monopolies which produce nothing other than what I would call 'lumpen development'. I will now liberally borrow from the late Andre Gunder Frank, who analysed a similar evolution, albeit at a different time and place. Today lumpen development is the product of accelerated social disintegration associated with the 'development' model (which does not deserve its name) imposed by the monopolies from the imperialist core on the peripheral societies they dominate. It is manifested by a dizzying growth of subsistence activities (called the informal sphere), otherwise called the pauperisation associated with the unilateral logic of accumulation of capital.

One can remark that I did not qualify the emergence as 'capitalist' or 'socialist'. This is because emergence is a process associated with complementarity, while at the same time conflict, of the logic of capitalist management of the economy and the logics of 'non-capitalist'—and potentially socialist—management of society and politics.

Among the experiences of emergence, some cases merit special mention as they are not associated with the processes of lumpen development. There is not a pauperisation among the popular classes, but rather progress in the living standards, modest or otherwise. Two of these experiences are clearly capitalist—those of South Korea and Taiwan (I will not discuss here the particular historical conditions which permitted the success of the implementation in the two countries). Two others inherited the aspirations conducted in the name of socialism—Vietnam and China. Cuba could also be included in this group if it can master the contradictions which it is currently going through.

But we know of other cases of emergence which have been associated with lumpen development of a massive nature. India is the best example. There are segments of this project which correspond to the requirements of emergence. There is a state policy which favours the building of an industrial productive system. Consequently there is an associated expansion of the middle classes and progress in technological capacities and education. They are capable of playing autonomously on the chessboard of international politics. But for a grand majority, two-thirds of society, there is accelerated pauperisation. We have therefore a hybrid system which ties together emergence and lumpen development. We can highlight the link between these two complementary parts of reality. I believe, without suggesting too gross a generalisation, that all the other cases that are considered emergent belong to this familiar hybrid, which includes Brazil, South Africa, and others.

But there exist also, and it is most of the other Southern countries, situations in which there are no elements of emergence as the processes of lumpen development occupy much of the society.

Chapter 15
Synthesis and Reflections

Interviewed by Amady Aly Dieng

Samir Amin was born in Egypt in 1931 and received his higher training in Paris. He is one of the most influential neo-Marxist development theorists of the past three decades. He has produced seminal work on the relationship between imperialism, capitalism and globalization and has been a tireless advocate for an alternative socialist development. Among his more than twenty major works are: Beyond US Hegemony? Assessing the Prospects for a Multi-polar World (2006), The Liberal Virus (2004), Spectres of Capitalism (1998), Imperialism and Unequal Development (1977), and Unequal Development (1976). He is currently based in Dakar, Senegal and is President of the Third World Forum.[1]

AAD Could you elaborate on your personal, intellectual and ideological trajectory and how it led you to adopt an intellectual position that capitalism represents a world system?

SA Iam a political animal and I can't separate my personal trajectory from my intellectual thought and my political actions and options. I explained in my memoirs, *A Life Looking Forward* (2007) how my attitudes and personal trajectories, intellectual thinking and political behaviour have all been combined. I have to say that early on, during adolescence, I took a triple inseparable position which has constituted my point of departure. This position is based firstly on a rejection of social injustice which I could see all around me in Egyptian society; the miseries of the working classes contrasted with the opulence and the waste of the wealthy classes. I have always rejected this. That was the point of departure of my social revolt. Secondly, my adolescence coincided with World War II and most probably my family influenced my position. I had adopted an anti-fascist position, I was an anti-Nazi and rejected the arguments of some other Egyptians that the enemy of my enemy was my friend, and therefore that the Nazis—as enemies of our imperial enemy the British—were friends. I considered Great Britain the friend in World War II. I was resolutely anti-Nazi and anti-fascist which led me early on to develop sympathies for the Soviet Union which was leading the

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war against the Nazis. The third dimension was my rebellion against the British imperialist domination. These three positions, which have always remained with me, were my starting point. It wasn't until my student years in Paris immediately after the war that I became an active militant in anti-colonial movements. But I also developed early on a vision of the world which, though located within a Marxist framework to which I still subscribe, was a break with the dominant Marxist vision of the time. In my PhD which was written between 1954 and 1956 and defended in 1957, I elaborate on this vision. The title itself 'L'Accumulation a l'E´ chelle Mondiale' ('Accumulation on the World Scale') summarized a position which was very new at that time—that capitalism had to be considered as a world system and that development and under-development are two sides of the same coin. In other words, underdevelopment is not a form of delayed development. I would say without false modesty that I was an anti-Rostovian even before Walt Rostow wrote his book, *The Stages of Economic Growth* (1960). And I would also say that Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein joined my standpoint on capitalism as a world system which I have maintained.

AAD How do you view the relationship between capitalism and imperialism?

SA My central idea, and I want to insist on this, is that capitalism is not only a world system, but it is a world system that is imperialist by nature. At each step of its development, since the conquest of America in the sixteenth century, it has been a system that has produced and deepened polarization, what I have called the 'centre–periphery'. This has been my central line, the central axis of everything I have produced on the evolution of the world system, the challenges of development, and the appreciation of experiments, whether socialist or others, against these challenges.

Therefore, imperialism is not a recent phenomenon. It has been tied to the development of monopoly capitalism at the end of the nineteenth century, as Lenin analysed. But it is a much older phenomenon than that. Of course the world expansions of capitalism and imperialism have passed through successive phases, each with their own particularity. Thus the shape of 'centre–periphery' polarization and the shapes through which imperialism expresses itself have changed, have evolved. But the polarization has never been reduced, it has always been deepened. And so the system has always been a capitalist imperialist system. I insist on this point, and I am not alone in maintaining it. The dependency school of Latin America, which I'm very close to, takes a similar approach. But this school did not form until the 1970s, roughly the same time as the world economy concept developed by Immanuel Wallerstein. I found myself close to these two schools of thought because I already had, and still have, a similar idea. In my writings dating from the 1960s, I always attempted to analyse the challenges confronting development politics within this framework.

AAD What do you mean when you use the term 'development' and what kind of change do you envision can be brought about by a process of development, or alternative development?

SA Development cannot be a catching-up strategy within the capitalist logic because capitalist logic forbids it. The logic of imperialist expansion renders catching up an impossibility. Thus one needs to see, and I have always tried to see things in this way, development as an invention of another kind, different from capitalism. Starting from there the idea of de-linking imposed itself. De-linking is not autarky but rather a way of thinking about development other than from a framework of capitalism, of catching up. I must say that I am joined today by numerous currents of thought, especially those within an ecological framework which state that catching up is impossible and unacceptable because it will bring about the destruction of the planet. I am also joined by all the ideological currents which point out how the logic of the market-rapid consumerism and excessive waste—lead to the destruction and impoverishment of the human being.

For me development is not a process of catching up in capitalism, but a process of inventing a new civilization. The problem of development, then, is not only how to solve the underdevelopment of countries from the periphery, it is also the problem of how developed countries can transform themselves, change the system. I don't believe that there is another term to designate this other possible future than socialism. I am not amongst those who, after the collapse of socialism, said we were at the end of History and that we were in a capitalist system that was destined to survive for eternity. I am also not amongst those who think that, after all, this is not such a bad system, as it guarantees, at least, or even produces democracy and even perhaps social progress along with inequality. I am not amongst those who have abandoned their 'illusions'. I am amongst those who think that a critique of the past has to be seen as a contribution to the transformation of the future and not at all as a capitulation.

AAD The term neo-imperialism has come into common usage, implying there's something new about Empire. Has something changed about imperialism, can it be conceptually distinguished from globalization and neo-liberalism?

SA On the 'what's new?' question I have said that the newness is always located in something that seems to me to be ancient. I have said earlier that the expansion of capitalism and imperialism passed through successive phases. We have certainly entered a new phase. And each of these successive phases brings its novelties and therefore its specificities which demand a new conceptualization. I am not amongst those who think that nothing changes, that it is always the same tune as usual. Even though some things don't change, even though Imperialism is constant, there are obviously variations in its modes of expression.

In my mind I would summarize what is new in two points. First, we have gone from a pluralist capitalist world system to a new stage in the deployment of imperialism. In the past we had imperialist powers in constant violent conflict which each other. We have moved from this system to another, characterized by the convergence of the interests and strategies of imperialist powers. Meaning we are witnessing a kind of collective imperialism

which one could call the triad of central, developed capitalist powers: the United States with Canada, Western and Central Europe, and Japan. Collective imperialism in my vocabulary could mean super-imperialism as Karl Kautsky had already imagined it in 1912. Never mind the word and the fact that some had imagined it earlier or not: it is something new which was built gradually after World War II and which is now in startling evidence. This collective imperialism has its own collective instrument for managing the planet, including its economic instruments (World Bank, IMF, WHO), and its instruments for political and military management (the G7, NATO). This does not mean that there are no internal contradictions within this collective imperialism. There are contradictions of all kinds. But in my mind these are contradictions which develop on a political and cultural front (in the sense of political culture), rather than at the level of divergence of economic interests of dominant capitalism. This is something new.

The second novelty is that the South has split. It's true that the South has never been homogeneous and the peripheries have always been diverse and have been shaped in different ways to fulfil diverse functions in the service of capitalist accumulation in its world expansion. Not only are the peripheries, the three quarters of humanity, made of people with histories far more ancient than capitalism, but they fulfil different functions in the capitalist system at its different stages of global development. However, one can say that up to a point, in the phase preceding World War II, the 'classic' phase which covers most of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, the contrast between 'centre' and 'periphery' was almost synonymous with 'industrialized regions and countries' versus 'non-industrialized regions and countries' which remained agrarian and mining-oriented in the frame of the global system. The common denominator was that these countries had not entered the era of industrialization. This changed after World War II. The struggles for national liberation and the victories of national freedom movements, whether radical (as in China or Vietnam) or moderate (with the simple objective of gaining independence as it was in other countries in Asia and Africa), put development on the agenda.

One remembers the 1960s and 1970s, the decades of development, and the pressure these countries put on the United Nation system to ensure that development be taken into account. Incidentally, development at that time was considered as a process of catching up within the system (for most countries), or catching up outside the system as was the case for the socialist countries. These victories—and not defeats as people say today (or other such absurdities)—these struggles for independence and socialist revolutions are at the origin of the preoccupation with development. These victories in the name of socialism, in the name of national independence, did constrain imperialism, which had to adjust to the needs of these countries as they engaged in the industrialization process. At that time it was imperialism that was constrained, that adjusted to the demands and needs which were in conflict with the logic of the expansion of world capitalism. Whilst today,

structural adjustment is exactly the opposite: it is the adjustment of the weak to the demands commanded by the strongest. These victories have produced what they have produced. They have produced a growing differentiation within the Third World. Some countries have engaged with industrialization, going further, whilst others have gone less far.

AAD Can you provide examples of the different ways the industrialization process occurred in the post-war period and comment on the challenges these pose in theorizing about 'emerging' economies?

SA Let's take the case of China. The Chinese miracle began in 1950 with the de-linking and the Maoist construction of a national conscience through a radical reform of agriculture and primary industries. These steps set the foundations for the subsequent miracle of the acceleration of industrial development. The decades preceding 1980 were not a period of stagnation, a period of waiting to discover the solution of the market. On the other side, other countries (and we who are in Africa know this well) moved towards industrialization only timidly.

This type of rupture is a characteristic of the current system. In the periphery are two groups. On the one hand, there is a group of societies carrying projects. This is the case not only of big countries like India, China and Brazil, but also of others of medium size, like Malaysia or some countries in Latin America. And on the other hand, we have societies not carrying their own projects (the rest of the Third World now coined 'marginalized'). I shall come back to that term which in my mind is questionable despite hiding some reality. This is a new challenge. The dominant literature presents the first group as the group of 'emerging countries' and readily interprets their progress as real development and real catching up. There is a literature on the Chinese miracle, on China becoming the major economic, military and imperialist power of the twenty-first century.

I believe that one can discuss the nature of these projects from different perspectives. First is the perspective of internal social conflict: are these projects aimed at installing a national capitalism in the wake of an accentuation of class divisions and a crystallization of antagonist classes? Or does one need to see more nuances, and see projects which combine forms of capitalist development with elements of social development in conflict with capitalist logic? This needs to be discussed and is not the topic of this interview: one cannot put China, India, Brazil and South Africa in the same bag and say these are emergent countries. They are very different from one another and so are their positions. One therefore needs, and this is what I am trying to do now, to analyse and critique the projects of these third world countries, but from another perspective than the one currently dominating the literature—from a perspective that combines the social content of the project and a judgement on their capacity to catch up.

My opinion is that these countries are largely embarked on a road with a dead end. They will not be able to reach their goal of catching up. Imperialism has reorganized itself to face that challenge. The militarization

of imperialism and the choice of the leader of the imperialist camp have the objective of making this catching up impossible. The strategy of the United States, the military control of the planet, is not only a strategy directed at the Iraqi people, but it is also directed at China: this is my perspective. Another reason which makes the catching up unrealistic is that as these countries go down this route, internal social contradictions grow and internal situations become more and more explosive. This can be seen in the case of China and other emerging countries. And with these conditions I do not believe that the prospect of any of these projects is as glorious as one would like to think.

AAD What are the fundamental problems posed by the notion of empire in relation to development theory and practice?

SA To answer this question we need to consider other third world countries, those which do not have a project and are therefore constrained and agree to adjust themselves unilaterally to the 'Empire', meaning imperialist globalization. These categories of countries have no project of their own but others have projects for them. We can talk about the American project for the Greater Middle East, because there is no Arab project; we can talk about the EU project for sub-Saharan Africa through the so-called partnerships agreements, because there is no African project or counter project. These situations are therefore very different from those of countries which have a project and are in conflict (albeit limited conflict) with the logic of imperialist expansion. This leads me directly to the questions concerning development in theory and in practice.

I am amongst those who think that it is not possible to separate theory from the practice of development. I do not consider myself a theoretician of development, but a practitioner of development who has always thought that there is no practice without theory, that we need to deepen theory to serve a practice which clearly dictates the reasons for choices and objectives. It is in this perspective that I come back to the question of de-linking. If what I have said so far is correct, meaning that the catching-up project in the capitalist logic is impossible, then we have to consider another option.

And this other option demands a de-connection in the political and ideological sense, to have other objectives to build another world, to de-connect in the practice of the management of the economic society. As long as this system remains imperialist this could lead to a reduction of external relations with the dominant system. But this is not the essence of the de-linking; the essence of de-linking is to give itself a different perception than the catching up one. The term de-linking has not been well received because it may be understood as implying autarky, but it is not that at all. We can find de-linking ideas in the anti-globalization movements nowadays.

AAD What new solidarities and collective action initiatives are emerging as a response to empire? In what ways do they represent an alternative to the dominant forms of capitalist logic?

SA The anti-globalization movements say that we need to build a better world. That we need to de-connect with the capitalist logic in the world as it is.

We need to break away from that logic and not only resist the negative elements of the system as it currently operates; we need to propose an alternative vision that is positive and different. This is anti-globalization. Of course there can be a conceptual diversity for the content of the objectives and also in the formulation of the strategies to achieve it. The current imperialist capitalism is obsolete. The evidence is that it needs military control of the planet to maintain itself. It faces 'storm zones' as the Chinese used to say. For this 'minority' of 75 % of humanity—all the Asians, the Africans and the Latin- Americans—the system in place is intolerable. And so, the rebellion (or the potential for rebellion) is permanent. But a rebellion does not necessarily mean an alternative positive push. Rebelling is resisting and refusing. To move from rebellion to the positive alternative is a difficult exercise. And this is what I call entering the long transition from imperialist capitalism to globalized socialism. This will not be a short transition opened up by revolutions which claim to be able to resolve all problems in the short historic time of a few years. It will be necessary to move through 'revolutionary progressions', allowing us to go further in the crystallization of the socialist alternative on the world scale. This alternative is for the people in the North as much as it is for the people in the South who are the principal (but not the only) victims of the expansion of world capitalism. For me, de-linking is a synonym for a strategy of development conceived in the perspective of the long socialist world transition.

This leads me naturally to the question of the alternative. This alternative was given a name two or three years ago. It is the socialism of the twenty-first century. I think this name is not bad. What is positive is that it is a rupture from the nostalgia of the past. It is not about going back on the experiences of the past, not at all. These experiments have been what they have been—neither hell nor paradise, as some portray them today—and they have allowed enormous achievement. They have transformed the world in a way. The dominant ideology says that these experiments have been failures and, therefore, we must accept capitalism as the eternal system. I believe this vision is completely false. On the contrary, the violence following the expansion of capitalism invites us to think more about the necessity of a new wave of socialism.

We must dare to compare the birth of socialism with that of capitalism. The first wave of capitalist projects happened in Italian cities at the beginning of the thirteenth century. This first wave was aborted. The second wave came a few centuries later to England, the northwest of France and the Netherlands. This is the one that resulted in capitalism really taking hold. This second wave would not have happened without the first. We can say as much about socialism. The first wave, aborted, will be followed by another one. In history, a great success is often preceded by attempts which did not succeed, but which nevertheless point at the nature of challenges. We must see the construction of socialism in the same light.

AAD What precisely is new about a twenty-first century perspective of socialism?

SA I would say there is something fundamentally new in the twenty-first century perspective of socialism. There will not be any socialist progress without full democracy. I am not thinking about the 'petty democracy' reduced to multi-party elections. Without a democratization of society in all its dimensions—starting from labour and the management of enterprises up to political management, passing through the management of family relationships, gender relations, and through all aspects of life and secularization (the separation between religion and politics)—there will be no progress. There will be no social progress in the direction of socialism in the twenty-first century without democracy. At the same time, no democratization is possible without social progress. Current ideology pretends that the system is not so bad because at least it brings democracy. I won't give the easy answer of how 'fake' that democracy is most of the time. What democracy in Iraq? Or in a Palestine occupied by Israelis? What democracy in the majority of countries where we have elections (as so often in Africa), but joke elections which produce no change? Democratization implies social progress. There is no democracy without one associated with (and not dissociated from) social change.

Dominant ideology presents democracy as a management process of politics dissociated from the social which is managed through the economy and the market. We need to associate what has been dissociated. The evidence that this is necessary is that people of Asia and Africa don't want the proposed democracy dissociated from social progress. That is why they engage themselves in the impasse and illusions of ethnic dictatorships and the pseudo-ethnic, religious and pseudo-religious. Because they consider the democracy which is offered to them (and they can see it through their experience) as a mockery that brings them nothing. This is what is new: the need to associate revolutionary progress and democracy, associate democracy and social progress.

This is my opinion which not everyone shares. For example there is a whole current represented within the anti-globalization world which thinks that it is not necessary to try to direct, to construct a positive alternative. They think it would be too dangerous. They think it is better to let life follow its course, as things will resolve themselves. This is the message of Negri's recent writings.

AAD Is the theory developed by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in their book *Empire* (2000) valid? And if so in which circumstances can we talk about imperialism potentially carrying advantages like democratization and social and economic development?

SA Negri has theorized this school of thought which finds its roots in the Italian autonomism according to which people, through their own behaviour, transform the world. I believe this is very optimistic. This had been theorized for a while by the neo-Zapatistas in Mexico, more specifically by the sub-commandant Marco who said: 'we will transform the world without taking the power'. Unfortunately I think that we also need to think in terms of power.

The most positive changes that are taking place in the world today are happening in Latin America, whether in Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia or other countries. These changes have challenged governments as they currently exist. This idea that the world can change by itself without a coherent political strategy sounds illusory. Negri is the spokesperson of this idea. Without false polemic I would say that Negri went from an extreme left-wing workers'-control position, which I critiqued at the time, to a right-wing position which I am still critiquing. It is not by chance that in this conceptualization Negri is forced to drop the term imperialism and to say that there is only one empire left, a big world system which transforms itself with a centre impossible to locate. Daily events since the wars decided upon and undertaken by the United States demonstrate that this vision is naïve. But it has some popularity amongst the western middle classes. Middle classes, in some ways, are victims of the system in that they are aware of the cultural impoverishment embodied by the market. Though they would like to defend their cultural values, at the same time they are also not in a situation as tragic as those doomed to die of hunger or of AIDS, for example. In these conditions the idea that the world can transform without too much effort is attractive. Unfortunately it is not realistic.

Those who ask me the question, 'Isn't it imperialism which brings democracy and social progress, so is it, after all, so bad?', they make me laugh. This type of democracy, as I have said, is not to be taken seriously. Take the case of Iraq as an example. If African and Asian people find refuge behind political Islam, political Hinduism, ethnocentrism which invites so-called 'peoples' to fight against each other, it is precisely because the model of democracy that the system offers them is perceived by them as a joke. Even though their answer isn't the right one, their assessment that this form of democracy is a joke is not wrong. And as for the social progress brought by the imperialist expansion, well this also makes me laugh. We are in a period of aggravation of social inequalities all over the world, from wealthy to poor countries. It is not pure chance that the fashionable slogan of the day is the 'fight against poverty', because this poverty is simply the product of the logic of expansion of the system.

AAD What is the role of intellectuals in bringing about change?

SA The intellectual is not the technocrat serving the system, but the one who critiques the system. There are no intellectuals at the World Bank. And so the intellectual, or the intelligentsia, is not able to be a civil servant in such institutions. The responsibility of intellectuals is to remain critical of the system. This is why I prefer to talk about intelligentsia because it is not a question of academic titles nor of the technical capacity of a bureaucrat or a technocrat, it is a question of intellectual capacity to take positions which are by nature inseparable from politics. It is a position that is critical by nature. This means that intellectuals have a big responsibility. I do not believe that intellectuals transform the world. But I don't believe that the world can transform without some decisive help from the intelligentsia.

For example we cannot imagine the French revolution, which was the great revolution of bourgeois history, without the Enlightenment. We could not have imagined the Russian revolution and the Chinese Revolution without the Third International, without the working class and the Marxist movement. In my mind we can also not think about the future without an intelligentsia which fulfils its role, which takes its responsibility.

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The Third World Forum (TWF) - Le Forum deu Tiers Monde (FTM)

A Short Presentation of the Organisation

Mission

Created in 1975 the Third World Forum assembles concerned intellectuals committed not only to the pursuance and expansion of the debate on the various possible development alternatives (itself considered in all its economic, social, political and cultural dimensions) but also to make real impact on the society concerned through debates.

Third World Forum mobilises, throughout the three continents (Africa, Asia, Latin America) about 1,000 personalities whose well known names usually associated with both creative thinking, capable of exhaustive probing and analysis of issues as well as men and women who proved their worth through their contributions in the formulation of policies, either as experts or as leaders of thought and social movements.

Third World Forum has been active for almost 30 years, during which it has been functioning as a network of intellectuals of three continents engaged in debates on various aspects of the 'challenge to the development' of the peoples concerned. Since this 'development' is in turn defined on the basis of the exigencies of a progressive social context ('development' for the benefit of the masses) that could foster enhanced democratisation of society in all of its dimensions (progress of political democracy, social rights, in gender issues, etc), in view of the mutual relationship between the internal social changes peculiar to the peoples and nations concerned and the prevailing trends in the global system. These debates concern macro-economic strategies, the forms of micro-economic management, analysis of economic forces' vision of society and socio-political movements, in other words, all aspects of social life, as they include all the major issues concerning the world system (world economy, North-South relations, problems of environment and those relating to national and regional security and geo-strategy).

Positively the objective of Third World Forum is to identify concrete alternatives and formulate policy recommendations in the various areas in which it conducts research. Those alternatives and policy recommendations should not be the

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product of teams of researchers studying the problems in isolation. The product must be the result of interactions between 'theory and practice', between the scientific analysis of the problems and challenges on the one hand, strategies of action and targets of actual social movements on the other hand.

In that spirit, TWF operates as a 'network' associating on the one hand organisations of what is usually called civil society and on the other hand centers of reflection where scientifically equipped thinkers pursue their research in response to the demands formulated explicitly (or implicitly in some cases) by the movements.

That choice is fundamental for Third World Forum. It stems from the idea that real world is not changed through pure 'academic' reflections, but basically through the activities of social actors. But simultaneously it considers that the more those actors will be intellectually equipped to analyse the challenges, the more will their formulation of targets for action and policy recommendations be feasible, possible, efficient from the point of view of advancing towards required alternatives.

Impact

Beyond the impact achieved through the publication of TWF and partners researches, the TWF has been animating a large set of debates, which have made a real impact. May be the best proof that this impact was not negligible is reflected is the role which TWF has been invited to play in the revival of the social movements throughout the whole world, more and more visible since the second half of the 1990s.

In that spirit Third World Forum was among the organisations that decided to set up together, the World Forum for Alternatives created in Cairo in 1997. The Secretariat of this World Forum for Alternatives is jointly run by CETRI (Louvain la Neuve, Director François Houtart) and Third World Forum (Samir Amin and Bernard Founou).

Third World Forum and the World Forum for Alternatives took the initiative, in partnership with others (*Le Monde Diplomatique* and Attac) in organising at Davos in January 1999, 'another Davos' opposed to the dominant globalised neoliberal economic strategies that constituted the agenda of the 'World Economic Forum' (dubbed Davos Forum) with comments by a representative sample of the major social organisations and movements (trade unions, peasant organisations, women's movements, NGOs and think tanks).

The initiative of this other Davos was widely publicised through the creation of the World Social Forum whose first three meetings were held in Porto Alegre (Brazil) in 2001, 2002 and 2003 and in Hyderabad (2003). Third World Forum and the World Forum for Alternatives are therefore actively involved in the development of the World Social Forum.

Third World Forum is now present in most major social fora, whether national, regional or global. In that way its contribution to the current most important debates is duly reflected.

Overall Strategy and Suggested Areas of Activities

The overall strategy of Third World Forum interventions and formulating its research programmes is defined every 3–4 years through the General Assembly of those who have been the coordinators of its major activities.

The current overall programme of Third World Forum has been formulated throughout the international major workshops organised in Dakar and Cairo (April 2001) and the major meetings of the Executive of the World Forum for Alternatives held in 2002 and early 2003. That overall integrated programme covers a wide range of areas of specific research, in response to the variety of the dimensions of the social reality. Such as:

- The new agrarian question and alternative prospects for peasant societies of the South;
- The new question of labour and prospects of restructuring labour unity;
- International Business Law or Peoples' Rights;
- Managing resources of the planet, the case of oil, the case of water;
- In favour of a real dialogue between Europe, Africa and the Middle East;
- Towards new concepts of regionalisation in the South;
- Africa in the global system, the economic and the political dimensions;
- The debt issue : towards an international law regulating debts;
- Social, gender and democratic movements in the South;
- International chaos and militarisation of the globalisation processes;
- Reviving the solidarity of the '77' vis a vis global issues.

This integrated programme involves close co-operation between think tanks and social movements. This form of co-operation, which constitutes the central focus of the ambitions of Third World Forum and those of the World Social Forum and the possible Regional Social Forums as well, probably define the specific character of the networks or networks of networks formed by these organisations.

This necessary integration between the critical analysis of systems (globalised neo-liberal dominant system in the dominant position and visions of society imagined as a counterpoint) and that of the explicit or implicit strategic objectives of the social movements operating in the real world finds its ultimate and decisive logic in the common concern of TWF, WFA and WSF to assist in formulating concrete, efficient and credible alternatives to the so-called global neo-liberal project.

This search for 'convergence in diversity' must proceed from permanent dialogue between 'analysts' of the reality and representatives of those of the social and political movements working to transform such reality in favour of the popular and national interests they uphold.

At the end of the exercise, it should be possible to define **our own agenda**, that of social and popular movements involved in current or future struggles, thereby allowing for our positioning beyond the sole 'response' to the agenda of the dominant system criticised (the agenda being that of G7 and the Institutions placed at its service—The World Bank, WTO and the World Economic Forum, dubbed Davos, in particular).

In this spirit, the Co-ordinators of the TWF and WFA networks recalled that our programmes must be rethought concretely by bearing the following requirements in mind:

1. Refine the functional analysis of the really existing contemporary capitalism", taking account of all the dimensions of the new realities through which it is expressed (scientific and technological revolution, transformation of production systems and social life, a more comprehensive geo-political globalised interdependence of the unilateral hegemonism of an exclusive super power, etc.). This refining effort should focus at the same time on the analysis of economic and social theories and on the language whereby its ideological dimensions are expressed. The analysis should also ensure a better integration of the economic and social dimensions of the globalised neo-liberal project and its political dimensions expressed, among other channels, through the real danger of militarisation of the globalisation process.
2. Refine the interpretation of the meaning ascribed to the on-going struggles and the movements inducing them by identifying explicit and implicit strategies adopted by all civil society actors, in terms of the dominated class and the dominating groups; and in particular, the "democratisation" strategies proposed by either parties.
3. Identify, through the interpretation of the meaning of the movements, the more distant perspectives in which they are placed, the fundamental values and principles of the visions of society that they inspire. This identification will be devoted to raising each and everyone's awareness of the diversity vital to the construction of the future. Such identification will also make it possible to further intensify the permanent criticism of the socio-economic theory, its basic concepts (economic efficiency, classes, peoples, nations and State), to identify those related to linkages between the authorities that are given prominence and those whose existence is veiled.
4. Have the ambition to inspire effective actions in the short, middle and long terms at all levels, from national to global levels.

Structures and Organisation of Third World Forum

- Third World Forum has been purposedly created 'small', that is avoiding systematically the trap of heavy administrative infrastructures, which are common to too many 'NGOs' proliferating during the last two decades. In that spirit what has been established as 'HQ' for the organisation of Third World Forum, i.e. our Dakar office, is only a small 'liaison office'.
- Third World Forum's activities rely on two sets of supporters:
  1. The members of its own network of individuals, competent and respected in the communities of researchers, thinkers and policy makers.

2. The associate partners, which are research centers and think tanks as well as eventually social organisations and movements interested by the relevancy for their action of the issues raised in our programmes.
   That network of partners, who are also in many cases associates in the World Forum for Alternatives and in the World Social Forum (and their national and regional replicas), would not function if not their positive assessment of the benefits that they draw from their inclusion in Third World Forum's activities.

- These light structures and complex patterns of interventions explain how such vast programmes as those of Third World Forum might be operated with a modest direct budget.

In fact Third World Forum acts as a *catalyst*.

This function is of utmost importance. It is needed in order to reduce the deficiencies resulting from the extreme fragmentation which characterises the panorama of researches conducted in the areas of Third World Forum's activities. It is perhaps because Third World Forum has been somehow successful in performing that function that it has become one of the corner stones of the global civil society as represented in the World Social Forum.

Source This text was taken from the website of The Third World Forum (TWF) - *Le Forum du Tiers Monde* (FTM); at: http://www.forumtiersmonde.net/fren/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=74&Itemid=78.

See also Samir Amin's website with additional texts at: http://www.forumtiersmonde.net/fren/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&id=13&Itemid=114. This website also offers a regularly updated list of Samir Amin's books and articles. Selected texts are for free download.

About the Author

Samir Amin (Egypt/France), was born in Cairo as son of an Egyptian father and a French mother (both medical doctors). He spent his childhood and youth in Port Said, where he attended a French High School and obtained a Baccalauréat (1947). He studied in Paris (1947–1957) with degrees in political science (1952), statistics (1956) and economics (1957). His PhD thesis (1957) was on: *The origins of underdevelopment—capitalist accumulation on a world scale* but retitled *The structural effects of the international integration of precapitalist economies. A theoretical study of the mechanism which creates so-called underdeveloped economies*. He worked in Cairo (1957–1960) for the government's "Institution for Economic Management". He was an adviser to the Ministry of Planning in Bamako (Mali) (1960–1963). In 1963 received a fellowship at the *Institut Africain de Développement Économique et de Planification* (IDEP), where he worked until 1970 besides being a professor at the university of Poitiers, Dakar and Paris (of Paris VIII, Vincennes). In 1970 he became director of the IDEP, which he managed until 1980. In 1980 Amin left the IDEP and became a director of the Third World Forum in Dakar.

Samir Amin wrote more than 30 books: *Les effets structurels de l'intégration internationale des économies précapitalistes. Une étude théorique du mécanisme qui a engendré les éonomies dites sous-développées* (1957); *Trois expériences africaines de développement: le Mali, la Guinée et le Ghana* (1965); *L'économie du Maghreb, 2 vols.* (1966); *Le développement du capitalisme en Côte d'Ivoire* (1967); *Le monde des affaires sénégalais* (1969); *The Class struggle in Africa* (1969); *Le Maghreb moderne (The Magrheb in the Modern World)* (1970); *1970, L'accumulation à l'échelle mondiale (mdöAccumulation on a world scale)* (1970); *with C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, Histoire économique du Congo 1880–1968* (1970); *L'Afrique de l'Ouest*

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About the Book

Samir Amin: Pioneer of the Rise of the South

Samir Amin (Egypt/France) is a leading intellectual on underdevelopment and the critique of capitalism. Dieter Senghaas (Germany) presents him as a *Pioneer of the Rise of the South.* These texts by Samir Amin have been selected for the purpose of encouraging readers to learn more of his work in tracing the historical trajectory of capitalism, which has consistently produced polarization at the global level. Thus the dominated peripheries cannot hope to catch up with the social organization prevailing in the dominant centres. Hence the impossibility of global capitalism being stabilized in its peripheries has resulted in the long decline of capitalism coinciding with successive waves of active involvement by the peoples of the South to shape a new world, potentially embarked on the long road to socialism. Amin presents this major conflict of the 20th century and identifies the new challenges that the system now faces in the 21st century. His analysis is conducted in terms of historical materialism and should be a useful tool for activists struggling for socialism. Their progress cannot be separated from that of the emancipation of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples.

This book includes in Part 1: 1) Biographical Notes; 2) Bibliography. Part 2 offers 4 key texts on the Theory of Historical Capitalism: 3) Theoretical Model of Accumulation and Development in the Contemporary World; 4) Unity and Change in the Ideology of Political Economy; 5) Is Social History Marked by Overdetermination or Underdetermination? 6) Multipolarity in the 20th century. Part 3 on the Contemporary Challenge analyses: 7) The Center Will Not Hold: The Rise and Decline of Liberalism; 8) The Countries of the South Must Take Their Own Independent Initiatives; 9) The Democratic Fraud and the Universalist Alternative; 10) Land Reforms: Desirable Land Tenure Reforms in Africa and Asia; 11) Transnational Capitalism; 12) Africa 50 years of Independence; 13) Aid; 14) Emergence and Lumpen Development, 15) Synthesis.

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